

HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN MACHINE GUN CORPS, C.E.F.

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Part II, Operations.

Introduction.	1
VIMY RIDGE.	
Introductory.	
Preparatory Phase.	
Plan of Attack: Use of Machine Guns.	
Special Training, Construction and Occupation of Battle Positions.	
Operations: April 9th, 1917.	
Subsequent events: April 10th to 14th 1917.	
General Observations.	
PASSCHENDAELE: October 7th, 1917 to November 20th, 1917.	50
General Plan of Operations.	
Reliefs and Moves from FIRST to SECOND ARMY.	
Machine Gun Preparations.	
Interval between taking over Line and Phase VI.	
Phase VI: October 26th, 1917.	
Interval between Phase VI and Phase VII.	
Phase VII: October 30th, 1917.	
Interval between Phase VII and Phase VIII.	
Phase VIII: November 6th, 1917.	
Interval between Phase VIII and Phase IX.	
Phase IX: November 10th, 1917.	
Subsequent events, November 11th to November 20th, 1917.	
Conclusion.	
Cdn. M.M.G. Brigades, Nov. 18th, 1917, to July 30th, 1918.	136
1st C.M.M.G.B. and attached Batteries, Nov. 18th, 1917 to March 22nd, 1918.	
German Offensive: March 21st to April 10th, 1918. (1st C.M.M.G.B. and attached Batteries).	
Canadian M.M.G. Units, April 11th, to July 30th, 1918.	
AMIENS: July 30th, 1918, to August 25th, 1918.	213
Introductory.	
Operations: August 8th, 1918.	
Operations: August 9th, 1918.	
Operations: Reliefs, Moves: August 10th to 25th, 1918.	
CAMBRAI: Phase I: August 26th to 28th, 1918.	295
Introductory.	
Operations: August 26th, 1918.	
Operations: August 27th, 1918.	
Operations: August 29th, 1918.	
CAMBRAI: Phase II: August 28th to September 5th, 1918.	337
Introductory.	
Minor Operations, August 30th to September 1st, 1918.	
Capture of DROCOURT-QUEANT LINE, September 2nd, 1918.	
Operations: September 3rd to 5th, 1918.	
CAMBRAI: Phase III: September 5th to October 1st, 1918.	385
Preliminary Period, September 5th to 26th, 1918.	
Capture of CANAL du NORD LINE and BOURLON WOOD, September 27th, 1918.	
Operations: September 28th, 1918	
Operations: September 29th, 1918	
Operations: September 30th, 1918	
Operations: October 1st, 1918	
CAMBRAI: Phase IV: October 2nd to October 12th, 1918.	463
Introductory.	
Preliminary Period: October 2nd to 8th, 1918.	
The Capture of CAMBRAI: October 9th, 1918.	
Operations: October 10th and 11th, 1918.	

First Battalion, C.M.G.C., October 3rd to 12th, 1918. Casualties.	
DOUAI to MONS: October 12th to November 11th, 1918.	498
Introductory.	
First Stage: CANAL de la SENSEE to VALENCIENNES.	
Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., October 12th to 19th. (-Nov. 6th), 1918.	
Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., October 12th to 29th, 1918.	
First Battalion, C.M.G.C., October 12th to 21st. (-Nov. 11th), 1918.	
Third Battalion, C.M.G.C., October 12th to November 2nd, 1918.	
Second Stage: Capture of MONT HOUY and VALENCIENNES.	
Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., October 30th to November 2nd, 1918.	
Third Stage: VALENCIENNES to MONS.	
Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., November 3rd to 6th (-Nov. 11th), 1918.	
Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., November 7th to 11th, 1918.	
Third Battalion, C.M.G.C., November 3rd to 11th, 1918.	
Casualties and Communications.	
Canadian Independent Force and Brutinel's Brigade.	
I. AMIENS.	544
Introductory.	
Formation and Organisation of Cdn. Ind. Force.	
The Battle.	
General Observations.	
Canadian Corps Returns to the FIRST ARMY.	
II. CAMBRAI, Phase I: August 26th to 30th, 1918.	569
Introductory.	
The Battle.	
Brutinel's Brigade (Composite Bde.)	
III. CAMBRAI, Phase II: August 31st to September 4th, 1918.	581
Introductory.	
Organisation.	
Plans of Engagement.	
The Battle.	
Observations.	
Organisation of Brutinel's Brigade on a semi-permanent Basis.	
IV. CAMBRAI, Phase III: September 5th to October 1st, 1918.	599
Introductory.	
Training.	
Preparations for the Attack.	
The Battle.	
V. CAMBRAI, Phase IV: October 2nd to 12th, 1918.	610
Introductory.	
Operations.	
Observations.	
VI. SENSEE CANAL to VALENCIENNES, October 12th to 28th, 1918.	624
Introductory.	
Action of Units with the Fourth Cdn. Division.	
Action of Units with the First Cdn. Division.	
Withdrawal of Units from the Line.	
Observation.	
VII. Capture of MONT HOUY and VALENCIENNES: October 28th to November 2nd, 1918.	653
Introductory.	
Operations.	
VIII. VALENCIENNES to MONS: November 3rd to 11th, 1918.	658-668

PART II.

OPERATIONS.

INTRODUCTION.

The Narrative of Operations contained in Part II includes an account of the Activities of Canadian Machine Gun Units in the Chief Battles in which the Canadian Corps was engaged during the years 1917 and 1918. In addition to this are described the Operations of the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade, in March and April 1918, under the FIFTH and FOURTH ARMIES, and a separate account is given of the Organisation and Achievement of the Canadian Independent Force and Brutinel's Brigade, of which a large and important section was composed of the 1st and 2nd C.M.M.G. Brigades.

The Operations show Canadian Machine Gun Units in Action at various Stages of their development.¹ The Battle of VIMY RIDGE, in which the Machine Gun came into its own as a Barrage Fire Weapon, was fought just a week before the Canadian Machine Gun Corps was authorized. Each Infantry Brigade at this time had its own Machine Gun Company, while the 4th Company in each Division was classified among Divisional Troops. The Training of all 4 Companies was coordinated by the D.M.G.O. At PASSCHENDAELE, Machine Gun Units fought as Divisional Machine Gun "Battalions," still retaining their Company Organisation and identity virtually unchanged. Throughout this Period and in the AMIENS Fighting of March and April, 1918, the Borden, Eaton and Yukon M.M.G. Batteries fought under the Tactical Control of the O.C., 1st C.M.M.G.B. Then, in the Spring and Summer of 1918, occurred the radical change in Infantry and Motor Machine Gun Organisation, and, in the Battle of the Hundred Days, is described the Action of the 4 Machine Gun Battalions and the 2 Motor Machine Gun Brigades, comprising the Active Units of the Canadian Machine Gun Corps, in the final Stage of their development.

The Operations of the Canadian Independent Force and Brutinel's Brigade are treated separately from the Operations of Machine Gun Battalions for the sake of clearness and because of the widely different Tactical Methods employed. The Motor Machine Gun Brigades, as part of the Independent Force, operated as highly Mobile Forces, and their Activities could, with questionable propriety and doubtful advantage, be described along with the Operations of Machine Gun Battalions which invariably fought in the closest possible Liaison with Infantry Units.

¹ See Part I.

VIMY RIDGE

APRIL 9TH to APRIL 14TH 1917.

INTRODUCTORY.

Instructions; Operation Orders Issued.

Preparations for the Attack on VIMY RIDGE were begun on December 23rd, 1916. On this date the Corps Commander published an outline of the entire Operation and asked Divisions to prepare detailed Attack Schemes for their own Frontages. The Corps Machine Gun Officer was instructed to "submit proposals for Machine Gun covering and barrage fire on the front of the Northern (Canadian) Corps."²

A detailed Corps Scheme of Operations was published in detail as soon as plans of the various Services were submitted. The Corps Operation Order for the Attack was published on April 4th, 1917.³ Several modifications in the original Plans were made prior to Zero day. The final allotment of Frontages Objectives and Divisional and Brigade Boundaries was shown on Map "T i." (Plate, end of Vol. II).

Intention.

The Task of the Canadian Corps was "to form a strong defensive flank for the Operations of the Third Army by the capture of the VIMY RIDGE from the COMMANDANT'S HOUSE to GUNNER CRATER, both inclusive."⁴ COMMANDANT'S HOUSE is at the Fork formed by the WILLERVAL Road with the Road leading over the Ridge from NEUVILLE ST VAAST through THELUS to BAILLEUL. GUNNER CRATER was in the German Front Line about 1000 yds. S.E. of SOUCHEZ. A line joining these two points ran obliquely to our Front Line, N.W. to S.E. and the ground to be taken formed a rough Triangle with the Apex to the North or Left Flank of the Corps Frontage. The total Front of Attack was something more than 6000 yds.

Tactical Importance of VIMY RIDGE.

The Capture of this high ground and especially of THELUS and HILL 140 North of the Village was vital to the Third Army Operations to the South in order to deprive the enemy of observation into the Valleys running S.W. from VIMY RIDGE. Also, as long as they maintained a hold on this Ridge the Germans could withdraw South of ARRAS even to the HINDENBURG LINE without compromising the security of their Line to the North. His possession of the French Manufacturing Districts would be in no way threatened by Operations successfully carried out by us to the South on the Front of the Third and Fifth Armies. The enemy attached the utmost importance to the Ridge and had already considerably reinforced his Line in that Sector.

Objectives.

The principal Objectives of the Canadian Corps were:

- (1) THELUS and HILL 140 to the North of it.
- (2) HILL 145 and LA FOLIE FARM.
- (3) FARBUS and GOULOT WOOD with the German Guns in them.
- (4) THE PIMPLE, the Northernmost portion of the Ridge.

Troops Available.

The Infantry, Mounted Troops and Motor M.G. Units available were the First, Second, Third and Fourth Canadian Divisions, the Fifth Division (British), 3 Squadrons Canadian Light Horse, 3 Companies Canadian Cyclist Battalion and the 1st Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade.

Each Infantry Division had at this time 4 Machine Gun Companies making with the Fifth Division (British) Companies, a total of 20 M.G. Companies at the disposal of the Canadian Corps.

² Canadian Corps G.295, dated December 23rd, 1916.

³ Canadian Corps O.O. No. 103.

⁴ Canadian Corps "Scheme of Operations."

Order of Battle of Divisions.

The Fifth Division (British) came under Orders of the Corps Commander on March 18th, 1917. All Divisions were in Position on their Battle Fronts by the middle of March in the following order from Right to Left of the Corps Frontage:- First Division (X), Second Division (Y), Third Division (A), Fourth Division (B). The Fifth Division (British), less 1 Infantry Brigade, was in Corps Reserve. (see Plate, end of Vol. II).

Machine Gun Dispositions.

The 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade were on Anti-Aircraft Duty under Corps Orders, protecting the various Dumps in the Corps Area from hostile Aerial Attack. The Machine Gun Companies were disposed in the Line under their own Divisions.

The Headquarters of Canadian Divisions were situated as follows:-

First Division	ECOIVRES
Second Division	CHATEAU D'ACQ
Third Division	VILLERS-AU-BOIS
Fourth Division	CHATEAU DE LA HAIE

PREPARATORY PHASE.

Raids October to April.

The activities of the Canadian Corps from the time the First Division took over a portion of the Line on the VIMY RIDGE Front in October, 1916, until the capture of the Ridge on April 9th, 1917, though they were not as a whole a part of the Operation itself, had much to do with its astonishing success. Throughout the whole of this period the enemy opposite the Corps Front were given no rest. They were kept constantly on the alert and forced by our Minor Operations, to maintain a continual watch on every part of their Line. In this period no fewer than 55 Raids were made by Units of the Canadian Corps, the largest of these being that of March 1st, 1917, on the whole Frontage of the Fourth Division. Our Machine Guns co-operated with the Infantry in the majority of these Raids and contributed largely to their success.

Harassing Fire, March 1917.

The Plans for the Attack on VIMY RIDGE included a Preparatory Phase during which attention was given by the Artillery to Wire Cutting, to the destruction of selected points in the enemy Defences, and to Counter Battery Work. But perhaps the most important feature of this Phase was the carrying out of a carefully co-ordinated Plan of Harassing Fire by the Artillery and Machine Guns.

Targets.

Very great importance was attached by the Corps Commander to this Fire. "From this 30 days onwards, every effort was made in the Divisions to increase the number of (Machine) Guns firing every night, and to arrange the selection of varied Targets in close co-operation with the Intelligence Branch of General Staff, the Artillery, and the Trench Mortar and Stokes Gun Officers. The following Targets were usually selected:-

- (1) "The targets previously engaged by the Artillery more especially wire entanglements in order to prevent repairs and hinder new work.
- (2) "Communication Trenches which could be engaged in enfilade; routes and tracks used by ration parties and reliefs; tramways and dumps known to be used by the enemy, especially the track, trenches and railways leading to trench mortar emplacements.
- (3) "Hostile Field Gun Batteries on the reverse slope of the Ridge in the BOIS DE LA FOLIE."⁵

64 Guns by day and 64 Guns by night were eventually employed in Harassing Fire on the Corps Front.

⁵ "Notes on the employment of Machine Guns in the Canadian Corps during the Operations leading to the Capture of VIMY RIDGE," compiled by the C.M.G.O.

Results of Harassing Fire.

During the month of March this Fire is known to have interfered very greatly with enemy Movements restricting them very largely to the Trenches. This was ascertained from German Prisoners captured during the period who stated that Movement overland was difficult and dangerous on account of our Machine Gun Harassing Fire. Their Statements were corroborated by the evidence of Photographs taken from the air. Snow lay on the ground for a part of March, making Tracks especially clear, and on the Photographs of the German Defences, taken at this time, very few overland Paths are to be distinguished within Machine Gun Range. Traffic was also greatly interfered with on enemy Trench Railways by Machine Gun Fire.

The restriction of Movement to Trench Routes and interference with enemy Trench Railway Traffic probably caused a great deal of congestion, thereby hindering the bringing forward of supplies of Food and Ammunition. A direct practical and beneficial result of the Harassing Fire Programme was experienced in the very marked decrease of hostile Trench Mortar activity. The large number of enemy Trench Mortars captured in the subsequent Operations showed that this diminution of Trench Mortar activity was not due to the withdrawal of these weapons, but rather to the difficulty of bringing sufficient Ammunition forward to keep them in Action.

One of the chief objects sought in the carrying out of Harassing Fire was the lowering of enemy Morale. This result naturally followed from a vigorous Programme of Fire, operating day and night over a period of several weeks, combine with constantly recurring Raids upon every part of the German Front. Casualties, but also, and perhaps, more especially by compelling individuals and parties to take constant precautions against avoiding Casualties.

Harassing Fire Decrease.

Difficulty was met with in maintaining this energetic Harassing Fire Programme. The life of a Machine Gun Barrel for purposes of accurate Indirect Overhead Fire is placed at 15,000 Rounds; so that Barrels used for Harassing Fire were "worn out" in a very few days. As Indirect Fire was comparatively a new thing at this time and the demands for War Materials of all kinds were so great, the supply of Machine Gun Barrels was quite insufficient for the requirements of a prolonged Harassing Fire Programme such as that being carried out under the Canadian Corps Machine Gun Officer.

Because of this shortage of Serviceable Barrels and also to a lesser extent on account of the increased demands on Machine Gun Companies for Working and Carrying Parties in preparation for "Z" Day, Machine Gun Fire decreased very substantially towards the end of March just at the time when it was most valuable. Germans captured on April 1st stated that the Reliefs and Ration Parties were then moving overland as far as the ZWISCHEN STELLUNG – 800 yds. to 1000 yds. behind their own Front Line without suffering many Casualties from our Machine Guns.

More Vigorous Programme.

On April 2nd new Instructions were issued by the Canadian Corps for the overhauling of the Harassing Fire Scheme. The number of Guns firing at night on each Divisional Front was increased and the Programmes were carried out with fresh vigour from this date onwards.⁶

Training Advantages.

Machine Gun Companies were enormously benefited both by the cooperation on a large scale with these Raids, and by the execution of Harassing Fire. Elementary knowledge of the Gun and facility in using it were maintained at a high level by All Ranks, while Officers and N.C.O.'s by constant practice in Indirect Fire, acquired Training in more advanced Machine Gun Work which proved invaluable to them in the actual Attack upon VIMY RIDGE. In his Instructions for Harassing Fire the Corps Machine Gun Officer laid particular emphasis upon this aspect of the work. "In the execution of this Programme every endeavour should be made to derive the greatest benefit possible in the training of the personnel of the

⁶ Memo of C.M.G.O. to B.G., G.S. on "Co-operation of Machine Guns with Artillery" dated February 12th, 1917.

Machine Gun Companies, especially the Officers.”⁷ This Training was particularly necessary and useful for the newly formed Divisional Machine Gun Companies.⁸

PLAN OF ATTACK: USE OF MACHINE GUNS.

General Plan: Infantry.

Simultaneously with the Attack of the Canadian Corps, the XVII Corps, on the Right, was to advance, keeping its Left in touch with the Right of the Canadian Corps. The I Corps, on the left of the Canadian Corps, was to remain in the Positions then held by it, in touch with the Canadian Corps Left Flank on which the whole movement of the Attack hinged.

Successive Stages.

It was planned to carry out the Operation in four Stages, occupying successively the BLACK, RED, BLUE and BROWN Lines. Owing to the importance of gaining early possession of HILL 140, it was arranged that the Canadian Corps should push on to the BLUE LINE, 500 yds. East of THELUS, with as short intermediate pauses as possible. The following Table shows the Timing of the Advance.

Line	Infantry	Reach	Pause	Infantry	Advance From
BLACK	Zero	35’	40’	Zero	75’
RED	Zero	95’	150’	Zero	245’
BLUE	Zero	320’	96’	Zero	416’
BROWN (Final)	Zero	468’			

Tasks of Divisions.

The First and Second Divisions were to attack right through to the BROWN LINE. The Third and Fourth Divisions had as their Final Objective the RED LINE. After the RED LINE had been reached the Third Division was made responsible for keeping touch with the Second Division in the BOIS de BONVAL and for protecting the Left of the Second Division from any Counter-attack coming from the direction of VIMY and the BOIS de GOULOT. The point of deepest penetration on the Right of the First Division, from our own Front Line to the BROWN LINE, East of COMMANDANT’S HOUSE, was in excess of 4000 yds. equal to 2/3 of the entire Corps Frontage of Attack.

Tasks of Brigades.

Each Division was to assault with 2 Brigades in Front and 1 Brigade in Reserve. The ultimate Task of leading the Brigades of each Division was the Capture and Consolidation of the RED LINE. The First and Second Divisions were to employ their Reserve Brigades for the Capture and Consolidation of the BLUE and BROWN LINES, 1 Brigade of the Fifth Division (British) was placed at the disposal of the Second Division to assist in the Capture of the BLUE LINE. The Reserve Brigades of the First and Second Divisions arranged to move forward from their Assembly Areas at such a time as would enable them to reach and form up behind the RED LINE ready to advance from it at Zero 245’. The pause of 2½ hours on the RED LINE gave ample time for this Movement and also for any alterations in the Plan which the Situation might demand.

The PIMPLE.

The Attack on the PIMPLE was made a Subsidiary Operation. This Northernmost portion of the Ridge forms a spur rising between the Villages of SOUCHEZ and GIVENCHY-en-GOHELLE and commanding the Valley of the SOUCHEZ RIVER between VIMY RIDGE and the LORETTE RIDGE to the North. It was planned to capture this important Feature, in co-operation with the I, Corps on a day subsequent to the Main Operation. The 10th Brigade in Reserve for the Main Attack was eventually given the Task of carrying out this Operation.

⁷ Memo of C.M.G.O. to B.G., G.S. on “Co-operation of Machine Guns with Artillery” dated February 12th, 1917.

⁸ See Part 1. Page 76.

Machine Gun Resources.

The total number of Machine Guns under the Canadian Corps for the Operation was 358, made up as follows:

16	Canadian Machine Gun Companies	256
4	Machine Gun Companies (Fifth Division, British)	64
	1st C.M.M.G. Brigade.	38
	TOTAL	358

Supporting and Barrage Fire.

The Machine Gun Barrages used by the Canadian Corps during the SOMME Fighting had proved very successful. The Infantry had become familiar with and had gained confidence in Machine Gun Overhead Fire. In the employment of Machine Guns for Supporting and Barrage Fire there was never a question of depleting the number of Guns actually required by the Assaulting Troops: the narrow Frontage of the Formations attacking and the liberal supply of Lewis Guns with the Battalions left room for the useful employment of a comparatively small number of Machine Guns with the attacking Troops for early Consolidation. "The Machine Guns used for Barrage purposes would otherwise have remained unemployed and this better utilization of idle resources allowed additional protection to be given to the Infantry at a time when they needed it most."⁹

The formation of a 4th or Divisional Company in each Division in the interval between the SOMME Fighting and the VIMY RIDGE Attack¹⁰ gave the Corps an additional Machine Gun Strength of 64 Guns. As a result of the experience gained in the use of these weapons on the SOMME and with the added number available the Corps Commander decided to employ them for Barrage and Supporting Fire in the VIMY RIDGE Operations on a scale unprecedented in Military History.

Tasks of Machine Gun.

Quite generally the Tasks assigned to Machine Guns were two-fold. The Assaulting Brigades retained as many of the Guns of their own Machine Gun Companies as were thought sufficient for the purposes of Consolidation and Defence against Counter-Attack: the 7th and 8th Brigades retained 12 Guns each for this purpose, all the other Brigades, 8 Guns each. The surplus Guns of the Assaulting Brigades not required during the Attack and for the early period of Consolidation, the Guns of the Divisional Machine Gun Companies and 1st Motor M.G. Brigade, and part of the Machine Guns of the Brigades in Reserve were employed on Barrage and Supporting Fire. Details for the Operation of these Guns was arranged and Fire Organisation Tables co-ordinated by the Corps Machine Gun Officer.

Mobile Guns.

There were 24 Mobile Guns in each Canadian Division, which, with the 8 Mobile Guns of the 13th Brigade (British) made a total of 104. Orders for the use of those Guns were issued by Divisions and Brigades. The Objects aimed at in their employment were:-

- (1) To get forward quickly.
- (2) To protect the Flanks of Brigades and Battalions
- (3) To cover Gaps occurring during the progress of the Operation.
- (4) To take advantage of fleeting Targets of Opportunity.
- (5) To assist in Consolidation and establish, early, a progressive Organisation in Depth of the Defences.
- (6) To repel Counter-attacks.

Part of the Guns were placed under the Control of Battalion Commanders, in each Assaulting Brigade; the remainder were held in reserve under the Brigadiers. Each Machine Gun was allotted a definite locality which was to be reached at a definite Stage of the Operation.

⁹ "Notes on the Employment of Machine Guns in the Canadian Corps during the Operations leading to the Capture of VIMY RIDGE," compiled by the C.M.G.O.

¹⁰ See Part I. Page 76.

Arrangements were made in conjunction with the Engineers, for the construction of Strong Points, during the period of Consolidation. These S.P.'s were to be manned by an Infantry Garrison with one or two Machine Guns from the Brigade Companies. In some instances, as e.g., in the case of the 1st Brigade, the O.C. of the Brigade Machine Gun Company (Captain W.M. PEARCE) was made responsible for siting and completing Strong Points on the Brigade Frontage.

Detailed Instructions for Mobile Guns.

The detailed Instructions for the Action of Mobile Guns are well illustrated by the "Preliminary Scheme of Consolidation by M.G. Companies of the Third Division," in part as follows:¹¹

4. "Disposition of Machine Guns Before and During the Advance.

- (a) "The Machine Gun Companies of each assaulting Brigade will attach two Machine Guns, under a Machine Gun Officer, to each of the assaulting Battalions, with the exception of the Battalions attacking on the Flanks of the Division, who will have four Guns attached to them on account of the steep depressions in S.22.b. and S.30.c., from where counter-attacks will probably be promptly launched.
- (b) "These guns will come under the direct orders of the Battalion Commander who will be responsible that they are sent forward at the proper time and to the proper place. Their jumping off places will be, for the left Machine Gun Company, the vicinity of the mouth of GRANGE TUNNELL, and for the Right Machine Gun Company, the vicinity of the mouth of GOODMAN TUNNEL. All Machine Guns sent forward must be given explicit orders as to their positions and duties.
- (c) "The Machine Guns will be sent forward as soon as possible after the objectives have been reached, in order to be ready to repel counter-attacks. The Guns detailed to Battalions will make their initial move forward as soon as the Infantry have left the first objective. They will take up positions in the first objective in such a way that they can effectively participate in the defence of this Line.
- (d) "The balance of the guns of these Companies which have up till now been distributed in their forward positions and been employed:-
 - (1) With holding our own front line system.
 - (2) With indirect fire on the barrage targets of Brigades and Divisions on their flanks.will now be led forward by their section guides, who will return for that purpose from the forward guns, to the positions occupied in the first objective by the guns of their corresponding sections.

5. "Dispositions of Machine Guns in Depth for the Close Defence of the Consolidated Lines (Outpost and Main Line of Resistance).

- (a) "Main Line of Resistance: When the final objective had been gained and is held by the Infantry, the guns in position in the intermediate objective will move forward to their pre-arranged positions, which will correspond, as closely as possible, to the locations of the strong points to be consolidated as the main resistance line. The Guns under Battalion control are deemed sufficient for this purpose. Care will be taken that the full length of the line of main resistance is enfiladed by Machine Gun fire; the guns will be posted in pairs, each pair in view of, and under fire from the pairs on its right and left, thus protecting each other. Barbed wire to be put up according to the Field of fire of the Machine Gun in such a manner that all the guns enfilade the front of the barbed wire. Care will also be taken that no promiscuous trench digging towards the front masks the fire from the Machine Guns.
- (b) "The Mobile Guns referred to in 4 (d) will, during the consolidation, be in position in the front objective vacated by the forward guns. The sub-section Officer or N.C.O. will get in touch as quickly as possible with the Officer Commanding the forward guns of this Section, who has sited the positions for the rear guns of his Section, who has sited his positions for the rear guns and will move them forward, if necessary, behind the forward line of guns in such a way that each gun in rear can see the positions of the guns in front, which they are supporting as well as the guns on the flanks, in order to form, in case of necessity, a second continuous belt of fire.

¹¹ Third Canadian Division G.45. Dated March 4th, 1917.

“It is not necessary that these rear line guns be posted in pairs.

“A tracing will be issued later showing the approximate position of all mobile guns and routes forward.

“These defensive guns will do no firing whatever, except in case of a well-defined counter-attack, and then only at close range.

- (c) “The Outpost Line will be defended by Lewis Guns.

Barrage Guns.

When the Mobile Guns had been allotted there still remained in the Corps 254 Machine Guns. Of this number 24 were held in Corps Reserve and did not actually take part in the Operation. The remaining 230 Guns were made available for Supporting and Barrage Fire. Owing to the great number of enemy Trenches to be captured, and on account of the Strength and Commanding Positions of most of them, it was decided that Machine Gun Supporting Fire should be given on the entire Corps Front at every step of the Attack. All arrangements for this Fire were made by the Corps Machine Gun Officer. A Creeping Machine Gun Barrage was prepared and Fire Organization Tables drawn up, to correspond with the Artillery Barrage. In order to assist the Infantry in warding off possible enemy Counter-attacks a Protective Machine Gun Barrage was established at each definite Stage of the Operation. Arrangements were also made for a Final Protective Barrage to be fired during the early Consolidation of the Final Objective.

Organisation and Moves of Barrage Guns.

The 230 Guns available for Barrage purposes were so distributed along the Corps Front and divided for the 4 Objectives, that 1 Machine Gun was allotted to every 50 yards of Frontage at each Stage. This distribution was calculated to give sufficient density to make the Barrage effective. To facilitate Control the Guns were organized into Batteries and Groups. 2 Machine Gun Sections (4 Guns each) were placed together to form a Battery with an Officer in charge. The Batteries in each Brigade Frontage constituted a Group, under a Group Commander. The Group Commander was in most cases the Officer Commanding the Machine Gun Company of the Brigade whose Frontage his Batteries were covering. Each Battery was designated by the letter or number of its own Barrage.

Owing to the depth of penetration of the German Lines on the First and Second Division Fronts it was necessary to fire the BLUE and BROWN LINE Barrages from successive Positions within the captured Area. This involved moving 8 BLACK LINE Batteries forward immediately after the Capture of the RED LINE, and 5 Batteries forward, later, after the Capture of the BLUE LINE. These BLACK LINE Batteries were to move forward under cover of the RED LINE Protective Barrage: the move of the BLUE LINE Batteries to their BROWN LINE Positions was arranged to take place in Echelon, 1 Battery at a time. As a precautionary measure the RED LINE Batteries, in the First and Second Division Areas, were instructed to remain in Position until the BROWN LINE was taken and permission to withdraw had been obtained from Corps Headquarters.

Control.

Divisions retained Control of the Guns covering their own Sectors. Divisional Commanders had the power to allot special secondary Targets to any Group of Guns within their Area, providing that the Final Barrage was in no way interfered with. The Final Barrage was everywhere the primary consideration. Similarly on any Brigade Frontage, the fire of the Group of Guns covering the Sector could be applied or withheld at the request of the Brigade Commander.

Communication.

The System of Communication adopted for all Barrage Guns is indicated on Plate ____.¹² The Group Commanders were personally to be stationed at the Battle Headquarters of their affiliated Brigades, or at the Headquarters of a Battalion of the Brigade, as turned out to be most convenient in the course of the Operation. They were connected with their Batteries by Telephone (buried Cable in most cases) for the BLACK and RED LINE Stages; and in subsequent Stages by Runners. Communications with Divisions were maintained through Brigade Headquarters.

¹² Plate not included (H.T.L.)

Composition of Batteries.

The Composition of the Batteries for the various Stages of the Attack is shown in the following Table:-

Composition of Barrage M.G. Batteries for the Capture of VIMY RIDGE, April 9th, 1917.								
Division	LINE	Name of Battery	Unit	TOTAL GUNS				
				BLACK	RED	BLUE	BROWN	TOTAL
First Division	BLACK	0	'A' Bty. 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade	8				
		1	½ 13th C.M.G. Company	8				
		2	½ 13th C.M.G. Company	8				
		3	'A' Bty. 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade	8				32
	RED	X	½ 2nd C.M.G. Company		8			
		A	½ 95th C.M.G. Company (British)		8			
		B	½ 15th C.M.G. Company (British)		8			
		C	½ 3rd C.M.G. Company		8			32
	BLUE	Y.1	½ 13th C.M.G. Company			8		
		X.1	½ 13th C.M.G. Company			8		16
	BROWN	Y.2	½ 1st C.M.G. Company				8	
		X.2	½ 13th C.M.G. Company				8	16
Second Division	BLACK	4	½ 6th C.M.G. Company	8				
		5	½ 13th C.M.G. Company	8				
		6	½ 14th C.M.G. Company	8				
		7	½ 14th C.M.G. Company	8				
		8	Eaton M.M.G. Battery	6				38
	RED	D	½ 4th C.M.G. Company		8			
		E	Borden M.M.G. Battery		8			
		F	Yukon M.M.G. Battery		8			
		FS	½ 5th C.M.G. Company		8			32
	BLUE	A1	'A' Bty. 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade			8		
		B1	'B' Bty. 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade			8		
		C1	½ 6th C.M.G. Company			8		
		D1	½ 13th C.M.G. Company			8		
		E1	½ 14th C.M.G. Company			8		
		F1	½ 14th C.M.G. Company			8		48
	BROWN	A2	'A' Bty. 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade				8	
		B2	'B' Bty. 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade				8	
		C2	½ 6th C.M.G. Company				8	24
Third Division	BLACK	H	½ 15th C.M.G. Company	8				
		I	4 Guns 8th C.M.G. Company & 4 Guns 9th C.M.G. Company	8				
		J	4 Guns 7th C.M.G. Company & 4 Guns 9th C.M.G. Company	8				
		K	½ 9th C.M.G. Company	8				32
	RED	G	½ 15th C.M.G. Company		8			
		H.I. J.K.	as above as above		32			40

Fourth Division	BLACK	L	½ 16th C.M.G. Company	8				
		M	½ 16th C.M.G. Company	8				
		N	½ 11th C.M.G. Company	8				
		O	½ 12th C.M.G. Company	8				
		P	½ 10th C.M.G. Company	8				
		Q	½ 205th C.M.G. Company	8				48
	RED	L.M	as above					
		N.O	as above					
		P.Q	as above	48				48
		TOTAL		150	152	64	40	406 ¹³

NOTE: RED LINE Barrage Batteries fired from BLACK LINE Barrage Positions, with the exception of "G" Battery, which did not fire the BLACK LINE Barrage.

Forecast of Ammunition Required.

The supply of Ammunition available from Divisional Ammunition Column was calculated on the basis of 15,000 rounds per Gun per day for a period of 3 days. The following amounts were provided at the Gun Positions and at forward Dumps, ready to be taken forward to the BLUE and BROWN LINE Batteries:-

First Division Companies	1,408,000	Rounds
Second Division Companies	1,568,000	Rounds
Third Division Companies	1,000,000	Rounds
Fourth Division Companies	<u>1,000,000</u>	Rounds
TOTAL S.A.A. for Barrage Batteries -	<u>4,976,000</u>	Rounds

These amounts were for use during the first 24 hours of the Operation. Further Supplies were arranged to be made available at the Battery Positions for subsequent days.

Distribution of Personnel.

In order to expose as few Men as possible during the Attack and so reduce the Casualties in trained Personnel, the following distribution was adopted throughout the Machine Gun Companies of the Corps:-

For each Section of 4 Guns:-

	Officers	Sergeants	Corporals	Gunners	TOTAL
(a) With the Guns	1	1	1	16	19
(b) With the M.G. Coy. Commander				4	4
(c) At convenient place near Divisional H.Q.				4	4
(d) At Transport Lines	1	1	1	6	9
TOTAL	2	2	2	30	36

Precise directions regarding the disposal of this Personnel were issued beforehand. Those with the M.G. Coy. Commanders were to be used to replace Casualties immediately; those at Divisional H.Q. should not be used without reference to the G.O.C. affiliated Brigades or Divisional Headquarters; and those as the Transport Lines were not to be used until Companies were withdrawn from the Line.

Attached Infantry Carriers.

In addition to the Machine Gun Personnel available in each Company, 2 Infantrymen per Gun Crew, 32 per Company, were attached as Ammunition Carriers. These Men joined the Companies 2 to 3 weeks

¹³ This Total includes Guns firing from successive Barrage Positions. The actual Total of Barrage Guns taking part in the Operation was 230 (see Pages 24 and 25.)

prior to the Operation and received preliminary Training with the Gun Crews which they were to assist during the Attack. In this way they became familiar with the work expected of them and not less important, they got to know the Officers, N.C.O.'s and men of the Machine Gun Companies.

One trained Gunner and the 2 Infantry Carriers per Gun were equipped with either Tump Lines or Yukon Packs to use in carrying Ammunition.

Loads and Equipment.

All Gun Detachments, whether Mobile or Barrage, carried Equipment and Ammunition as follows:-

- No. 1 Gunner, Tripod and 2 gallons of Water.
- No. 2 Gunner, Gun and Spare Parts.
- No. 3 Gunner, 3 Belt Boxes filled and Condenser Bag.
- No. 4 Gunner, 3 Belt Boxes filled.
- 2 Carriers (Infantrymen) – Each, 3 Belt Boxes filled.

Each Man carried, in addition to his load as detailed above:-

- 3 Sand Bags
- 1 Mills Bomb
- 50 Rounds Rifle Ammunition
- 48 Hours Rations
- 1 Full Water Bottle
- 1 Ground Sheet

and remaining articles of Battle Order Dress. Leather Garkins were carried or worn.

Each Section of 4 Gun Crews carried 8 Shovels.

Pack Transport.

The problem of getting Ammunition forward for the Barrage Guns during the course of the Operation, and of establishing new forward Dumps in the captured area was a very difficult one, particularly on the First and Second Divisional Fronts. In order to prevent the overlapping of labour and to ensure a quick and uniform supply to all Batteries a Divisional pack train was formed in each Division, composed of all available Pack Animals with the 4 Machine Gun Companies. An Officer was placed in charge of each Pack train; this Officer received his Instructions from the D.M.G.O. of his Division. In addition to S.A.A. these animals were to take forward Water, Lubricating Oil and Rations.

Machine Gun Repairs.

Under arrangements made by the Divisional M.G. Officers, an advanced Armourer's Shop was established well forward in each Division, to effect all possible immediate repairs to Machine Guns.

Distribution of Machine Guns.

The final distribution of the Machine Guns of all Units in the Corps, both for Mobile and Barrage Work, is shown in the following Table:-

Distribution of Machine Guns for the Capture of VIMY RIDGE, April 9th, 1917.				
Unit	Mobile Guns	BARRAGE GUNS		
		No. of Guns	Battery Position	Divisional Control
'A' Bty., 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade		8	O, A1, A2	First Second
'B' Bty., 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade		8	3	First

			B1, B2	Second
Borden M.M.G. Battery ¹⁴		8	E	Second
Eaton M.M.G. Battery ¹⁴		6	8	Second
Yukon M.M.G. Battery ¹⁴		8	F	Second
1st Canadian M.G. Company	8	8	Y2	First
2nd Canadian M.G. Company	8	8	X	First
3rd Canadian M.G. Company	8	8	C	First
13th Canadian M.G. Company		16	1, 2, X1 Y1, X2	First First
4th Canadian M.G. Company	8	8	D	Second
5th Canadian M.G. Company	8	8	FS	Second
6th Canadian M.G. Company	8	8	4, C1, C2	Second
14th Canadian M.G. Company		16	6,7, E1, F1	Second Second
7th Canadian M.G. Company	12	4	J	Third
8th Canadian M.G. Company	12	4	I	Third
			I (4 Guns)	Third
9th Canadian M.G. Company		16	J (4 Guns)	Third
			K (8 Guns)	Third
15th Canadian M.G. Company		16	G, H	Third
10th Canadian M.G. Company	8	8	P	Fourth
11th Canadian M.G. Company	8	8	N	Fourth
12th Canadian M.G. Company	8	8	O	Fourth
16th Canadian M.G. Company		16	L, M	Fourth
Attached Units of 5th Division (British)				
13th M.G. Company	8	8	5, D1	Second
15th M.G. Company ¹⁵		8	B	First
95th M.G. Company ¹⁵		8	A	First
205th M.G. Company ¹⁵		8	Q	Fourth
TOTAL	104	230		

TOTAL Mobile and Barrage Guns 334. In Reserve 24. GRAND TOTAL 358.

SPECIAL TRAINING, CONSTRUCTION AND OCCUPATION OF BATTLE POSITIONS.

Training of Mobile Gun Crews.

By the middle of March all Companies were training hard for the Attack. All Gun Crews were assigned their jobs and no detail of Training was omitted to ensure that All Ranks should be ready to carry out their work during the Operation. Crews of Mobile Guns practiced the Attack with the Infantry Battalions of their own Brigades. As for the SOMME Attacks, Training Areas were staked out to a scale on the known plan of the German Trench Systems and Defences to be captured. Forward Gun Crews went over the taped ground representing the Area of their own Attack with the Battalions and Infantry Companies to which they were to be attached for the Operation. The Positions to which the Guns were to go were generally taped.

Besides facilitating co-operation with the Infantry this practice had a very great advantage of giving All Ranks a thorough knowledge of every detail of the Operation. The entire Operation as planned was gone over in this way several times, and the specified Loads and Equipment were carried by Gun Crews. Considerable attention was paid also to Casualty Practice, which gave N.C.O.'s and Men opportunities for the exercise of initiative and leadership such as often occur in the emergencies of an Action.

This Training was supplemented by Map Reading, and a careful study was made by All Ranks of Trench Maps showing their Objectives and the ground over which they had to pass to reach them. In many cases

¹⁴ Moved to Fourth Division afternoon of April 9th.

¹⁵ Remaining 8 Guns in Reserve.

as e.g., the 2nd Company (Major R.McP. STEWART), members of forward Gun Crews were given tracings of German Trenches showing their own Objectives and Routes. This was found in the Attack greatly to assist the early establishment of Machine Gun Defences.

Courses in German Guns.

Most Machine Gun Companies found time to give an Elementary Course of Training to All Ranks in the German Machine Gun. The knowledge gained in this way proved of immense value, as many of the enemy Guns which fell into our hands were immediately turned on the Germans.

Assembly of Mobile Guns.

Mobile Guns assembled with their own Brigades. Those operating closely with Infantry Battalions joined the Battalions in their jumping-off Trenches prior to Zero Hour. The Guns under direct Orders of Brigadiers and those operating with Brigades in Reserve proceeded to Assembly Areas allotted to them.

Training of Barrage Gun Crews.

All the Brigade M.G. Companies, and the Batteries of the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade had ad some considerable experience in Barrage Fire for Machine Guns, both in the SOMME Operations and in previous Fighting. Some Units e.g., the 1st M.M.G. Brigade, had done Overhead Fire since the Summer of 1915¹⁶. But there was a lack of uniformity in Training and Method. The 1st Motor M.G. Brigade, under Lieut.-Col. BRUTINEL had evolved their own Method. All those Officers in the Field who had passed through the Canadian Machine Gun School at NAPIER BARRACKS, SHORNCLIFFE, or the Canadian Machine Gun Depot at CROWBOROUGH had received Training in Indirect Fire along similar but not identical lines¹⁷. Instruction was also given in the Field under Divisional and Brigade arrangements, but the detail of Instruction had not been co-ordinated throughout the Corps.

Special School for Officers.

In view of the extensive use of Machine Guns for Barrage Fire in the VIMY RIDGE Operations and in order to ensure skill in the use of guns and uniformity of Practice a Special School for M.G. Officers was started in January¹⁸. The Courses included Map Reading, quick Resection of Position on the ground and all Calculations necessary for Indirect Fire. 80% of the M.G. Officers of the Corps attended Courses here prior to the Attack.

Training in Units.

In addition to the actual practice in all the details of Indirect Fire gained during the Winter in Raids and carrying out the Harassing Fire Programme, constant Training was carried out in the Units while out of the Line. As soon as the Fire Organisation Orders were issued all Barrage Batteries were practiced in the execution of the actual lifts and Barrages to be fired in the Operation. Visibility Maps and Aeroplane Photographs of the Area of Attack were given to all Units to supplement the Study of Maps, and Field Glass Reconnaissances were carried out by those Officers who were to take Batteries forward to BLUE and BROWN LINE Barrage Positions.

Preparation of Positions.

The Outline of the contemplated Machine Gun Scheme was issued on January 19th. On March 19th Instructions were published by the Corps giving the names of Machine Gun Batteries, allotment of Positions to the various Machine Gun Units and forecast of Ammunition required. Previous to this date BLACK and RED LINE Battery Sites had been selected and considerable Work done on the improvement of Positions and construction of Shelters and Dugouts. From this time on Companies were busily engaged in completing this work, storing the Battery Positions with Ammunition, and filling up Forwards S.A.A. Dumps. The greatest care had to be taken in digging Positions prior to the Operations as most of the ground was commanded by enemy Observation Posts.

¹⁶ See Part I. Page 71.

¹⁷ See Part I. Page 73.

¹⁸ See Part I. Page 79.

All Preparations were complete and Barrage Guns in Position by April 7th, ready for the Attack which was arranged to take place on the morning of the 8th. On the 7th, the Operation was postponed 24 hours.

Battle Order.

The following was the Battle Order of Infantry Brigades for the various Objectives from Right to Left of the Corps Front.

TASK	DIVISION	BRIGADE	BATTLE FRONTAGE
A. BLACK and RED Objectives	First	2nd	3 Battalions
	First	3rd	3 Battalions
	Second	4th	3 Battalions
	Second	5th	3 Battalions
	Third	8th	3 Battalions
	Third	7th	3 Battalions
	Fourth	11th	3 Battalions
	Fourth	12th	3 Battalions
B. BLUE and BROWN Objectives (In reserve for A.)	First	1st	3 Battalions
	Second	6th	3 Battalions
	Fifth (British)	13th	3 Battalions
C. In Reserve	Third	9th	
	Fourth	10th	
	Fifth (British)	14th & 15th	

THE OPERATION: APRIL 9th, 1917.

General.

Our Barrage opened at 5.30 A.M., April 19th; at the same time several Mines were exploded, and our Troops advanced to the Attack. On the First, Second and Third Divisional Fronts the Operation proceeded as planned, and all Objectives were taken. The Advance was delayed by the stubborn Resistance of the Germans on the Front of the Fourth Division which reached a Line on the 9th corresponding roughly with the BLACK Objective. To meet this Situation the Third Division formed a Defensive Flank to the North and consolidated on the Line of its own Final Objective. The Fourth Division pushed on to the RED Objective on the following day.

Action of Mobile Guns.

Generally speaking the Mobile Guns moved forward at times varying from Zero to Zero plus 2 Hours. On the 11th Brigade Front where the Attack was held up before HILL 145, the Mobile Guns, - 8 of the 10th Company (Lieut. BRITTON) in CAVALIER TUNNEL, and 8 of the 11th Company (Capt. CLERK) in TOTTENHAM CAVES – remained where they were by Orders of the Brigadier, until dusk on the 9th.

First Division Mobile Guns.

All forward Guns of the First Division Companies reached their positions as planned in good time and without serious Casualties. The 2nd and 3rd Companies operated with their Brigades for the Capture of the RED and BLACK Objectives. The 1st Company went through to the Final Objective.

2nd Company.

The Guns of the 2nd Company (Maj. STEWART) advanced with the 8th C.I.Bn. (in Brigade reserve), leaving their Assembly Area at Zero plus 40 minutes. These Guns were on the extreme Right of the Corps Attack. All the Crews reached their previously selected Positions without Casualties. 4 Guns went forward to commanding Positions just in rear of the RED LINE: the other 4 were sited for Defence of the BLACK Objective, thus establishing Defence in Depth. Emplacements were built at once, and Consolidation effected along with the Infantry.

3rd Company.

Each of the Infantry Battalions of the 3rd C.I.B. had loaned 1 Colt Gun to the 3rd Machine Gun Company (Major HOUGHTON, M.C.). The 4 Guns this supplied were named by Personnel of the 3rd Company

who were trained, in the interval before the Operation, in the use of this weapon. For the actual Assault, therefore, the 3rd Company had 4 Colt and 8 Vickers Guns each; the Right Group, commanded by Lieut. HOUSE, operated with the 15th C.I.Bn., the Centre Group, commanded by Lieut. CHAMBERS, with the 14th C.I.Bn., the Left Group, commanded by Lieut. R.D. TAYLOR, with the 16th C.I.Bn. All the Mobile Guns were under the command of Major HOUGHTON, at Advanced Company H.Q., 300 yds. S. of les TILLEULS, on the LENS-ARRAS Road. Guns assembled with the attacking Battalions of the 3rd C.I.B. in the Jumping-off Trench, prior to Zero.

The 3rd C.I.B. attacked the BLACK and RED LINES on the LEFT of the 2nd C.I.B. Mobile Guns went forward with the Second Wave. During the pause in the BLACK LINE all Guns were placed in Defensive Positions. At Zero plus 75 the advance was continued, with the Second Wave of Infantry, to the RED LINE. The 4 Colt Guns remained on the BLACK LINE till 1.00 P.M., when they were withdrawn. The remaining Mobile Guns were sited for the Defence of the RED LINE and Positions consolidated. Communications were immediately established laterally, between Groups, and to the Rear with Company Advanced H.Q. On his Report on the Operation, the G.O.C., 3rd C.I.B. wrote: "The Third C.M.G. Company carried out their work as a protection to the flanks and to the RED LINE expeditiously and without hitch, and were instrumental in securing 7 of the captured Machine Guns."

1st Company

The 1st M.G. Company (Capt. W.M. PEARCE) had the farthest to go as their Brigade was responsible for capturing the BLUE and BROWN LINES on the First Division Front. Of the 8 Mobile Guns of this Company, 3 went forward with the 4th C.I.Bn. Headquarters, 2 with the 3rd C.I.Bn. When the BROWN Objective was taken and Outposts establish in FARBUS WOOD these Guns occupied Positions in front of the Main Resistance Line. The remaining 3 Guns of the Company were placed in rear of this Line, 2 of them in Strong Points constructed under Captain PEARCE's directions. (See Page).

Second Division Mobile Guns.

In spite of the deep Advance on the Front of the Second, as well as the First Division, all Guns reached their Positions with few Casualties.

4th Company.

The forward Guns of the 4th Company (Major FORBES-MITCHELL) on the Right Sector of the Division were placed in prepared Strong Points for the Defence of the RED and BLACK LINES. 4 of these Guns under Lieut. SMALLCOMBE, moved forward at Zero plus 55 minutes; the remaining 4 commanded by Lieut. A.D. GRAY, went forward at Zero plus 6 hours. None of these Guns were attached to Infantry Battalions, but remained under Orders of the Brigadier.

5th Company.

4 Guns of the 5th Company (Major S.W. WATSON) advancing on the Left Divisional Sector to the BLACK and RED LINE Attack, were detailed to protect the Brigade's Left Flank and stop Enemy Counter-Attacks from VIMY Village through BONVAL RAVINE. The Crews of these Guns, under Lieut. B.A. TAYLOR, left their Dugouts close up to the Front Line at Zero plus 40 minutes. After a short rest on the BLACK Objective, they set out and reached the RED LINE on either side of the LENS-ARRAS Road. The Guns were sited so as to command the BONVAL RAVINE and protect the Left Flank of the Division: close co-operation was maintained with the 25th C.I.Bn., on the Right, and touch was at once established with 2 Third Division Guns on the Left under Lieut. MORGAN of the 8th Company. Major WATSON's 4 remaining Mobile Guns moved up at 4½ hours after Zero, as pre-arranged, to assist in the Defence of 2 Strong Points, on the Frontage of the 24th and 26th C.I. Bns.: these Units, along with the 25th C.I.Bn., on the Left, occupied the Main Line of Resistance for the 5th C.I.B.

6th Company.

The Task of the 6th Company (Major A. EASTHAM) was similar in the Second Division to that of the 1st Company in the 1st Division Attack. The Mobile Guns went forward past the BLACK and RED LINES to the Capture and Consolidation of the BLUE and BROWN Objectives. 4 Guns under Lieut. HARDIMAN were attached to the 29th C.I.Bn., and 4 Guns under Lieut. C.V. WILLIAMS operated with the 27th C.I.Bn. Lieut. HARDIMAN's Guns got into Position early and did exceptionally good work supporting the Advance of both Battalions to the BROWN LINE. These 2 Sections had numerous Targets of German Infantry and Gunners on the Reverse Slope of the Ridge during the day. 2 German

Machine Guns were captured, along with a large Store of S.A.A., and were used with good effect throughout the remainder of the Operation.

Third Division Mobile Guns.

The Mobile Guns of the Third Division, although not having so deep an Advance as the most Forward Guns of the 2 Right Divisions, had much difficult work to do. The Right Flank of the Division was particularly vulnerable as it included the BONVAL RAVINE. This feature consisted of a Re-entrant 200 to 300 yds. wide, leading up the Eastern Slope of the RIDGE from VIMY Village: its steep sides were fringed with Woods and gave excellent concealment for enemy Troops attempting a Counter-attack. Also the Third Division was responsible for protecting the Left of the Second Division from German Attacks through GOULOT WOOD to the Right of the BONVAL RAVINE. The Left Flank of the Third Division was also placed in an exposed position owing to the check of the Fourth before HILL 145. The exceptional opportunities afforded on both Flanks for effective Machine Gun Work were taken advantage of to the fullest extent by Machine Gun Officers in command of Forward Guns.

8th Company.

The Mobile Guns of the 8th Company (Lieut. COULLS) on the Right Divisional Sector, were distributed as follows from Right to Left:-

- 4 Guns under Lieut. MORGAN with the 1st C.M.R. Bn.
- 2 Guns under Lieut. ROWAT with the 2nd C.M.R. Bn.
- 2 Guns under Lieut. HICKS with the 4th C.M.R. Bn.
- 4 Guns under Lieut. PITCAIRN in Brigade Reserve

Lieut. MORGAN was given the Task of defending the BONVAL RAVINE and the Right Flank. Lieut. ROWAT's Guns were to advance in the Centre of the Brigade Front, and Lieut. HICKS was responsible for the Machine Gun co-operating on the Left Flank.

Lieut. MORGAN moved forward from the Jumping-off Trench at Zero hour. Leaving 8 of his Guns to follow under the command of Sergeant CUTTLE, he pushed on himself with the other 2 Guns under protection of our Barrage, reaching the previously selected Positions in advance of the Infantry, at 7.34 A.M. His Guns were at once placed to command the BONVAL RAVINE in Position 50 yds. E. of the LENS-ARRAS Road near the point where it bends Eastwards along the N. Side of the Ravine towards VIMY Village.

Soon after the Guns were in Position about 300 Germans were seen 100 yds. away in the lower ground in Front. These were immediately fired on and approximately 100 Casualties inflicted. The remainder of the enemy took shelter in the Dugouts along the Road beside the steep N. Side of the Ravine. L/Cpl. SAUVE and L/Cpl. CAIRNS were left in charge of the 2 Guns with Instructions to keep a careful watch upon the entrances to the Dugouts. Going forward with 7 Men, Lieut. MORGAN Bombed the Dugouts capturing 150 Germans, including 6 Regimental Officers and 1 Staff Officer. Some of the enemy who attempted to escape were caught in the Fire of the 2 Machine Guns posted to command the Dugout entrances. Later in the morning during Consolidation, the same Officer with 2 Other Ranks and a Lewis Gun, rushed an enemy Machine Gun Post concealed in the wooded high ground on the Left of the Ravine, capturing the Gun and 3 surviving members of the Crew. Sergeant CUTTLE, with the other 2 Guns of this Section took up Defensive Positions 250 yds. in rear of the RED Objective.

The Guns under Lieut. ROWAT and HICKS got forward to their Positions in excellent time and without serious Casualties, advancing with the Infantry in each case. Lieut. ROWAT had his Guns on the RED Objective at 7.15 A.M. Positions were consolidated and many Targets of enemy Infantry and Transport, on Roads in the vicinity of VIMY, were engaged during the day. In the afternoon, the Germans heavily shelled the Area and one of Lieut. ROWAT's Guns received a direct hit by a heavy Shell which destroyed the Gun and killed 4 members of the Crew. The 4 Guns in Brigade Reserve were moved up at 6.30 A.M. to Support Positions in Rear and to the Left of LA FOLIE FARM.

7th Company.

Previous to Zero Hour the Mobile Guns of the 7th Company (Lieut. HALE) were distributed as follows from Right to Left:-

- 2 Guns under Lieut. BURNHAM with the R.C.R.
- 2 Guns under Lieut. McDOWELL with the P.P.C.L.I.

- 4 Guns under Lieut. MORRIS with the 42nd Bn.
- 4 Guns under Lieut. MOTHERSGILL in Brigade Support

The 8 Guns with Infantry Battalions went forward shortly after Zero, keeping closely in touch with the Battalions to which they were attached. Their movements proceeded very much as planned. (See Third Division Instructions, Page) Lieut. BURNHAM on the Right and Lieut. McDOWELL in the Center, built 4 Emplacements for Lieut. MOTHERSGILL's Guns during the pause on the BLACK LINE. These Emplacements were occupied by the Support Guns as soon as the Forward guns had moved up to the Strong Points prepared along the Main Resistance Line.

By 8.30 A.M. all Guns were in Position and 2 Belts of Fire established across the Brigade Front, one in Front and one in support. Lieut. BURNHAM was in touch with the 8th Company Guns under Lieut. HICKS on the Right, near the ECOLE COMMUNE. One Gun Detachment of Lieut. BURNHAM's overran its Strong Point, and got over the Crest of the Ridge; this Crew effectively engaged Parties of Germans retreating to BLOATER TRENCH at the foot of the Ridge.

Lieut. MORRIS, on the Left Flank placed his Guns so as to cover completely this threatened part of the Line. A great deal of Machine Gun Fire was encountered by his Men throughout the day, coming from the direction of HILL 145, still in the hands of the Germans. One of his Guns was put out of action about Noon, and was replaced in the evening by a Gun from Support.

Under Orders of the Brigadier a Gun was sent up at the same time to Lieut. BURNHAM who reported the junction of the R.C.R. and the 4th C.M.R. in the right in need of Reinforcements. These 2 Guns were replaced in Support by 2 Guns of the 9th Company (Major McFAUL), detached from "K" Barrage Battery under orders of the G.O.C., 7th C.I.B., whose Frontage this Battery was covering.

Fourth Division Mobile Guns.

Mobile Machine Guns on the Fourth Division Front were in Action, during April 9th, on the 12th C.I.B. Sector only.

10th and 11th Companies.

As already stated the Guns of the 10th and 11th Companies operating with the 11th C.I.B., on the Right Divisional Sector, remained throughout the day in their Assembly Positions. In the evening they were ordered up to Defensive Positions in rear of the Black Objective.

12th Company.

The 12th C.I.B. had two distinct Tasks, viz., the capture of the BLACK and RED Objectives, and the securing of the Left Flank of the entire Corps Attack. As the Attack progresses, therefore, it was necessary to form a Defensive Flank to the Left as well as to maintain the Advance in the direction of the Attack. Our Troops were here exposed to enemy Fire from the Flank as well as from the Front and particularly heavy Casualties were sustained in this Sector on this account.

The 8 Consolidation Guns of the 12th Company (Major L.F. PEARCE) were attached as follows from Right to Left:-

4 Guns	2 under Lieut. PEVERLEY)	to 38th C.I.Bn.
	2 under Lieut. COTTON)	
2 Guns	under Lieut. HALL	to 72nd C.I.Bn.
2 Guns	under Lieut. BEVAN	to 73rd C.I.Bn.

The Guns under Lieut. PEVERLEY and Lieut. COTTON were to take up Positions in the vicinity of No. 4 and No. 6 Craters, respectively, as soon after Zero Hour as possible. These Craters were on high commanding ground about 200 yds. in rear of the BLACK Objective near the Centre of the Brigade Sector. Lieut. HALL and Lieut. BEVAN were responsible for the Machine Gun Defence of the new Left Flank. All Guns left the Jumping-off Trenches at Zero. At 6.00 A.M., 30 minutes after Zero, Lieut. PEVERLEY, having proceeded on a Compass Bearing, reached his Position ahead of the Infantry. After a hurried reconnaissance he found that No. 5 Crater afforded a better Field of Fire than No. 4, and his 2 Guns were immediately dug in on the forward lip of the Crater, and opened Fire on the retreating Germans. 2 German Machine Guns and 12 enemy Gunners were captured in this Crater. One of these Guns was at once put into Action and fired with good effect by L/Cpl. ANTHONY. Soon after carrying at No. 5 Crater, Lieut. PEVERLEY observed a Gap on the Right Flank of the Brigade and 1 Gun was placed to cover it. On the evening of the 9th this Gap was closed by the 85th C.I.Bn. from Brigade

Reserve. The Strong Point was consolidated by digging a Trench behind the forward lip of the Crater. A further Gun was sent up as a Reinforcement by Major PEARCE during the morning of the 9th from Lieut. COTTON's Sub-section.

12th Company.

Lieut. COTTON's 2 Crews, following the inclination of the Battalion, bore too far to the Left and down hill in the direction of GIVENCHY. Severe Casualties were suffered, including Lieut. COTTON wounded, and 1 of the Tripods was destroyed. Of these 2 Crews one eventually joined Lieut. PEVERLEY: the other with only 4 Men left out of 11, and its Tripod Carrier missing, was ordered back to re-equip and get the Gun into condition for firing.

The Guns under Lieut. HALL operating with the 72nd C.I.Bn., on the 12th C.I.B. Left, had an unfortunate time. The Sub-section left our Lines at Zero Hour and made straight for their Objective. When across the German Lines Lieut. HALL was hit, receiving 5 wounds in the head and body. He, however, kept going until having grown too weak to proceed further, he was persuaded to go to an Advanced Dressing Station. Both Tripods of this Sub-section were knocked out by Shell Fire, 4 Other Ranks were killed and 5 wounded. The Tripods were replaced by 2 sent up from the 12th Company Barrage Battery. Lieut. J.A. RIDDELL replaced Lieut. HALL and Other Rank Casualties were made up as far as possible from Men in Reserve. In the meantime 1 of the Guns had been taken forward by L/Cpl. MUNNOCH, who found, on arrival at the Objective, that he was the only Man left of his Crew. He at once placed himself under Orders of a 72nd Battalion Officer and gave great assistance in establishing Infantry posts.

The 2 Guns were eventually placed for Consolidation in the vicinity of the old GUNNER CRATER.

The other 2 Left Flank Guns under Lieut. BEVAN went straight for the new CRATER, formed by a Mine exploded at Zero, and were in Position for Consolidation.

16th Company.

In order to give additional strength to the Machine Gun Defences of the 12th C.I.B. Sector, 2 Guns of the 16th Company (Captain E.W. SANSOM) were sent up from "M" Battery to No. 2 CRATER at 10.00 A.M. The Guns were ably commanded by Lieut. GAUVREAU and engaged many Targets of Opportunity.

Black and Red Line Barrage Batteries.

The Task of those Batteries firing the BLACK and RED LINE Barrages was comparatively simple and straightforward with the single exception of "G" Battery. The Positions were prepared, stored with Ammunition and occupied prior to Zero. Owing to the extreme care taken in camouflaging the Work, few Casualties were sustained during the Operation: 5 Batteries had no Casualties. It is doubtful if any of the Battery Positions had been located by the Germans.

"G" Barrage Battery.

"G" Battery consisting of 8 Guns of the 15th Company (Captain W.N. MOORHOUSE) had a more difficult Task. The Position for the Battery, which fired for the Capture of the RED Objective only was chosen in the German Front Line to the Right of the Sunken Road leading out of NEUVILLE ST VAAST in a N.-easterly direction over the Ridge. This Position could not be occupied until after the German front System of Trenches was carried. Also, the Guns had to be ready to open Fire at Zero plus 105. Lieut. HARTLEY, in charge of the Battery, by a skilful reconnaissance discovered a Gap in the hostile Barrage as soon as it was laid down. Taking advantage of this Gap, he left the Assembly Position immediately and conducted the Personnel of his Battery, numbering 100, through the German Barrage, arriving at his Battery Position at Zero plus 20 with the loss of only 1 Other Rank, slightly wounded. All Guns were in Positions and ready to fire 1 hour after Zero.

Blue and Brown Line Barrage Batteries.

The Task of the BLUE and BROWN LINE Batteries, on the First and Second Divisional Fronts, was a most difficult one and called for a very high degree of skill and leadership on the part of the Officers, and a maximum of determination and endurance on the part of All Ranks.

The 8 BLUE LINE Batteries¹⁹ viz: (Right to Left), Y1, X1, A1, B1, C1, D1, E1 and F1 had all supported the Capture of the BLACK Objective. On completion of firing the BLACK LINE Barrage, they moved forward, under cover of our RED LINE Supporting Fire, to their BLUE LINE Barrage Positions. These were situated in the vicinity of the Captured BLACK LINE. During the pause of our Infantry on the RED LINE, emplacements were dug, Ammunition was brought up and the Guns got ready to fire at Zero plus 4½ hours.

4 of these Batteries, viz. X1, A1, B1, and C1, carried out a second move forward to BROWN LINE Positions X2, A2, B2, and C2, situated about mid-way between the RED and BLUE Objectives. This move was conducted in Echelon, one Battery at a time. The 5th BROWN LINE Battery, Y2, moved direct to its Barrage Position from the Brigade Assembly Area. As soon as possible after arrival, all Guns opened Fire on their BROWN LINE Targets in accordance with Fire Organisation Orders.

The 4 Batteries which fired 3 Barrages and made 2 moves with Equipment, Guns and Ammunition, over rough-shell-torn ground and under very trying weather conditions, performed one of the most arduous feats of the whole Operation. The total distance covered from the First to the Third Positions was between 3500 and 4000 yds. The Composition of these Batteries was as follows:

Name	Unit	Officer Commanding
X2	½ 13th C.M.G. Company	Lieut. A. MacKENZIE
A2	'A' 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade	Major M.A. SCOTT
B2	'B' 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade	Capt. E.H. HOLLAND
C2	½ 6th C.M.G. Brigade	Lieut. WADDINGTON

Casualties in these Guns were relatively slight with the exception of X2 Battery. Lieut. MacKENZIE had the misfortune to come under very heavy shell fire when leading his Battery across our own Front Trench System. 5 Other Ranks were killed and 3 Guns were put out of Action. For the Barrage at X1 Position the Battery had only 5 Guns as a result of these Casualties. The Targets of the Guns destroyed were covered by the other Guns of the Batteries and the Rate of Fire speeded up to compensate for the reduction in the number of Guns. This loss was made up by 3 Guns sent up to X2 in time for the BROWN LINE Barrage, from other Crews of the 13th Company at Y1 Position.

Barrage Guns Diverted.

During the Advance of the 1st Brigade through the BLACK and RED Objectives to their Attack on the BLUE and BROWB Objectives, considerable enemy Sniping and Machine Gun Fire was met with coming from the XVII, Corps Area on the Right. In order to stop this Fire, which was causing him Casualties, the Brigadier ordered 4 of the 1st Company Barrage Guns into Action. These Guns were on their way to Y2 Battery Position advancing with the Infantry. After effectively engaging the Flank Targets, they moved up to Y2 where they joined the other 4 Guns of the Battery already in Position in time to fire the BROWB LINE Barrage.

Switch of Barrage Battery Fire.

While the Infantry were halted on the RED LINE, a Counter-Attack was threatened on the Left of the Second Division Front at the foot of BONVAL RAVINE. The G.O.C. 5th Brigade at once ordered a Concentration of Machine Gun Fire to be applied to the danger Area. Major WATSON, O.C., 5th Company, Commanding the 5th Brigade Barrage Group at once had the Fire of FS Battery switched to this Target, and engaged it from Zero plus 150 to Zero plus 200 when word was received that conditions were again normal. FS Battery resumed Fire on the RED LINE Protective Barrage.

Move of Barrage Guns.

About 2.00 P.M. on the 9th, after the Capture of the BLUE LINE, in accordance with the Plans for the Operation, the Eaton M.M.G. Battery (8 Battery), which had fired the BLACK BARRAGE, and the Borden and Yukon Batteries (E and F Batteries), which had fired the RED Barrage, moved overland from the Second to the Fourth Division Areas, about 4000 yds. with Guns and Equipment. On arrival there the Eaton Battery was ordered into Corps Reserve, and proceeded to LE PENDU, near VILLERS AU BOIS. The other 2 Batteries came under Orders of the 12th C.I.B. The Borden Battery occupied "R" Position, in

¹⁹ For Composition see Pages 18-19.

rear of SOUCHEZ Cemetery; the Yukon Battery relieved 8 Guns of the 205th Company (British) at "Q" Position.

Protective Barrage Raised.

In the late afternoon of the 9th, the Machine Gun protective Barrage was raised on the First Divisional Front and on the Right of the Second, in order to fall clear of our Patrols sent out through FARBUS WOOD, the village of FARBUS and STATION WOOD to the FARBUS-VIMY Railway.

Use of Pack Trains.

The Divisional Machine Gun Pack Trains of the First and Second Divisions²⁰ gave invaluable assistance to the Forward Batteries by bringing up S.A.A. and Water to the Battery Positions and to Dumps established in the captured ground. By 3.00 P.M. on April 9th, Lieut. HAYWOOD, 1st C.M.G. Company, in charge of the First Divisional Pack Train, had established a Dump of 100,000 Rounds of Ammunition and a supply of Water in Petrol Tins, 300 yds. E. of the RED Objective and central to the Machine Gun Batteries on the Divisional Front. Altogether, during the same day 400,000 Rounds of S.A.A. were delivered at this Dump by the Pack Train, and besides this, a considerable amount was taken direct to the Battery Positions.

Capt. FERRIS of the Canadian Light Horse was in command of the Second Divisional Pack Train. This Officer succeeded in getting forward a large amount of Ammunition and Water for the BLUE and BROWN LINE Barrage Guns.

Carrier Sections.

Special arrangements were made by the Divisional M.G. Officer of the First and Second Divisions for the employment of Infantry Carriers, supplied by Brigades on a basis of 2 per Gun Crew. In the case of the Barrage Guns, 1 of these Men per Gun, or 8 per Battery, were detached from the Gun Crew. All the Men so detached were placed together as a Carrier Section under the Command of an Officer and used to carry Ammunition forward at Zero hour, co-operating with and supplementing the work of the Divisional Pack Trains.

Lieut. MILNER, (13th Company) for the First Division, and Lieut. NORTHGREAVE (4th Company) for the Second Division, in charge of the Carrier Sections did such excellent service. By 8.00 A.M. on the 9th, Lieut. NORTHGREAVE had established an Ammunition Dump 1600 yds. in advance of our original Front Line.

SUBSEQUENT EVENTS – APRIL 10th to APRIL 14th, 1917.

Remainder of Objectives Captured.

By the night of April 9th/10th, the whole of VIMY RIDGE in the Area of the First, Second and Third Divisions was in our hands. On the Fourth Division Front the Germans still held HILL 145 and most of the ground between the BLACK and RED Objectives. A Protective Barrage of Artillery and Machine Guns was established across the entire Corps Front. During the evening of the 9th, our Machine Guns replied to a number of S.O.S. calls sent up from our own Front Line. Harassing Fire was carried on throughout the night of the 9th/10th. HILL 145 was captured during the night, by the 85th and 47th C.I.Bns., and BEER TRENCH, on the Forward Slope of the HILL, was occupied by 6.00 A.M., April 10th.

At 3.15 P.M. on the 10th, the 10th C.I.B. which had been in Reserve on the previous day, attacked and captured the remainder of the RED LINE to the E. The Fourth Division Machine Gun Batteries fired in accordance with Fire Organisation Orders originally issued for the Operation on the previous day.

Consolidation.

Consolidation was now carried out along the whole Front. The 13th Brigade (British) was withdrawn and rejoined the Fifth Division on the 10th. Inter-Divisional and inter-Brigade Boundaries were altered and Tasks and Frontages assigned to Formations in accordance with plans for Consolidation.

²⁰ See Page 23.

Machine Gun Withdrawals and Reliefs.

Machine Gun Moves and Reliefs were carried out in conformity with the requirements of the Machine Gun Defence of the captured Ground. Those Gun Crews which had done the severest work in the Attack were relieved by Guns whose Tasks had been less exacting, or were withdrawn where possible.

‘A’ and ‘B’ Batteries 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade, at A2, and B2 Positions were withdrawn on the night 11th./12th and returned to their Billets at GOUY SERVINS and DIVION respectively.

By the evening of the 10th all the Barrage Guns of the 13th, 15th and 95th Machine Gun Companies (British) had rejoined their Brigades. These Batteries had done everything possible to make the Operation a Success and their assistance was very greatly appreciated by the First and Second Divisions with whom they had co-operated. The 205th Machine Gun Company (British) also did excellent work with 8 Guns at “Q” Battery Position, under the Fourth Division, where they were relieved on the afternoon of the 9th, by the Yukon Motor M.G. Battery.

Redistribution of Targets.

The Machine Gun Protective Barrage, to be laid down in response to our own S.O.S. was redistributed under Divisional arrangements among the Guns remaining in Position.

Harassing Fire.

A regular Program of Indirect Harassing Fire was persistently carried out during these days by the Machine Guns of all Divisions; while Mobile Guns, well-sited on the high Eastern slope of the Ridge, denied overland movement to the Germans within effective Machine Gun Range.

Capture of PIMPLE.

In addition to the work of Consolidation, the Fourth Division was given the Task of completing the Capture of the Ridge by taking the PIMPLE. The Operation was successfully carried out by the 10th C.I.B., on April 12th. The Twenty-fourth Division, 1 Corps, on the Left, at the same time attacked the high ground called the BOIS-en-HACHE immediately N. of the SOUCHEZ RIVER. The Attack took place at 5.00 A.M. during a blinding snow-storm, and resulted in the capture of all Objectives, in spite of determined Opposition. The 12th C.I.B. pushed forward their Line under the same Barrage to make it conform to the Advance of the 10th C.I.B. on their Left.

Machine Gun Co-operation.

8 Mobile Guns of the 10th Company (Lieut. BRITTON), went forward with the Infantry. One of these Guns was destroyed early in the Action; the other 7 occupied Positions beyond the German Front Line and had many good Targets with Direct Fire.

Harassing Fire.

A Supporting and Protective Barrage was fired by 5 Batteries of Machine Guns disposed as follows, Right to Left, in the neighbourhood of SOUCHEZ:-

Name	Unit	No. of Guns
Q	Yukon M.M.G. Battery	8
R	Eaton M.M.G. Battery	6
T	Borden M.M.G. Battery	8
V	½ 205th M.G. Company (British)	8
S	½ 205th M.G. Company (British)	8
TOTAL		38

At the same time, the 5 Barrage Batteries on the 11th and 12th C.I.B. Fronts, viz., L, M, N, O and P, fired on their own S.O.S. Targets, while 8 Consolidation Guns, 4 of the 12th Company (Major L.F. PEARCE) and 4 of the 16th Company (Captain SANSOM), harassed enemy Communication Trenches and Strong Points in rear of the Ground attacked.

Plans for Further Attack.

On the same day as the PIMPLE was captured, Instructions were issued²¹ for a further Attack in conjunction with the XII Corps, on the Right. Our Patrols had ascertained that the enemy were holding VIMY and the Line of VIMY-FARBUS Railway in Strength. The First, Second and Third Divisions were to undertake the Attack on this Line; the date was not fixed but was likely to be April 14th.²²

Enemy Retirement.

The Germans, however, anticipated this Operation by a hurried withdrawal on the 13th. Our Line was at once advanced and by the evening of the same day was pushed out more than 100 yds. E. of the Ridge along the whole Corps Front, and included the Village of WILLERVAL, VIMY and GIVENCHY-en-GOHELLE. The Fourth Division was relieved along their portion of this new Front by the Fifth Division (British) as soon as their Line was established.

Reliefs and Withdrawal of Machine Guns.

After being relieved by Guns of the Fifth Division (British), the Fourth Division Machine Guns were withdrawn to Machine Gun Camp, 1 mile E. of GOUY-SERVINS on the South-Western edge of the BOIS de ROUVIGNY. On the same day, the Borden, Eaton and Yukon M.M.G. Batteries were withdrawn to huts in le PENDU.

Further Advance.

On April 14th, our Line was further advanced to a depth averaging 1000 yds. and including the whole of the BOIS de l'HIRONDELLE, on the Left. Stiff enemy Opposition was met with and, from this date, fighting resumed the aspect of Trench Warfare.

Casualties to Machine Gun Personnel, April 9th to 14th, 1917.

The following table shows the Casualties to Canadian Machine Gun Companies in the Battle of VIMY RIDGE, April 9th to 14th, 1917:-

Unit	Officers			Other Ranks			TOTAL	
	Killed	Wounded	Missing	Killed	Wounded	Missing	Officers	O.R.s
1st C.M.G. Company		1					1	
2nd C.M.G. Company				1	6			7
3rd C.M.G. Company ²³		1		4	13	4	1	21
13th C.M.G. Company				7	14			21
4th C.M.G. Company				4	3	2		9
5th C.M.G. Company				3	9			12
6th C.M.G. Company				3	14			17
14th C.M.G. Company		1		3	9		1	12
7th C.M.G. Company				11	15			26
8th C.M.G. Company		1		4	10		1	14
9th C.M.G. Company		1		3	6		1	9
14th C.M.G. Company					1			1
10th C.M.G. Company				3	6			9
11th C.M.G. Company					3			3
12th C.M.G. Company		3		5	11		3	16
16th C.M.G. Company					1			1
1st C.M.M.G. Bde		1			11		1	11
Borden M.M.G. Battery								
Eaton M.M.G. Battery					1			1
Yukon M.M.G. Battery					1			1

²¹ Canadian Corps G 522/S.156/48, dated April 12th, 1917.

²² First Division, Preliminary Order, dated April 12th, 1917.

²³ Attached Infantry Carriers are included.

TOTAL		9		51	134	6	9	191
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GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

Physical Difficulties Overcome.

The Attack on VIMY RIDGE took place under very adverse weather conditions. The Battle began in a heavy snow-storm and snow again fell on the afternoon of the 11th. The weather throughout was cold and stormy. The strenuous firing Schedule for Machine Guns entailed a great deal of Belt Filling and the weather conditions added very materially to the difficulty of filling Belts and keeping them dry and clean. Rain and Snow made the ground heavy and almost impassable. All Ranks had little or no sleep for 72 hours. The work of getting Guns and Equipment forward, of digging Emplacements and constructing Shelters, and for carrying out the Fire Programme under these conditions, placed a heavy strain on the vitality and endurance of all who took part in the Advance. No words could adequately describe the cheerfulness of spirit with which all hardships were borne, and the keenness and determination which surmounted every obstacle.

Divisions pleased with Work of Machine Guns.

All Divisions expressed their satisfaction with the part the Machine Guns played in the Operation. In the SOMME Fighting the Infantry became familiar with and gained confidence in Machine Gun Overhead Fire: any mistrust still remaining was dispelled by the excellent service rendered by the Barrage Guns in the VIMY Operations. On the Front of the Third Division, it was reported that the enemy were seen to run from our Artillery Barrage into our Machine Gun Barrage. During the pause of the First and Second Divisions on the BLACK LINE, the Machine Gun Protective Barrage effectively assisted in "blinding" the enemy occupying the ZWISCHEN STELLUNG 400 to 500 yds. in front.

Moral effect of Barrage Guns.

The Continued Fire of our Guns gave great encouragement to the Infantry during their Advance and exercised an incalculable moral effect on our men, quite apart from its destructive effects upon the enemy. Also the immediate response of Machine Guns to our S.O.S. Signals gave an additional sense of security to our Troops in the Front Line.

Completeness of Our Victory.

The Battle of VIMY RIDGE constitutes one of the most complete and decisive Engagements of the War. The Germans were utterly defeated and driven from the Field. No serious attempt at a Counter-attack was made. So disorganized were they that it was unnecessary to apply the Final Barrage beyond the time laid down in Fire Organisation Orders. The Ground won was never again re-occupied by the Germans.

A Landmark in Machine Gun Development.

In the History of Machine Gun Science the Battle will always hold a unique place, for it proved beyond question the value of the Machine Gun as a Light Artillery Weapon, as well as a Weapon of Opportunity used in close support of the Infantry. Its employment hitherto for Overhead Supporting and Barrage Fire had been to a great extent experimental: its potential powers were understood and made use of by very few soldiers and most of them were themselves Machine Gun Officers. Lieut.-Colonel BRUTINEL, with the support of the Corps Commander at every Stage, had been instrumental in introducing the practice of Overhead Indirect Fire into all Machine Gun Units of the Canadian Corps: but outside the Canadian Corps, the use of the Machine Gun for Indirect Fire was not generally believed in; and it was definitely discouraged in British Schools of Machine Gun Instruction at CAMIERS, in FRANCE, and at GRANTHAM in ENGLAND.

Increase in Use of Barrage Fire.

The entire success of the VIMY Operations, and the unquestioned important contribution of Machine Gun Barrage Fire to that success, marked the beginning of a new era in Machine Gun Work. Machine Gun Methods of the Canadian Corps at one became the object of study of Staff Representatives and Machine

Gun experts sent from other Corps of the British Army and from the French Army.²⁴ By the end of 1917, the Machine Gun had taken its proper place in the Instruction and Practice of the British Army, as a weapon intermediate between Infantry and Artillery.²⁵

²⁴ See Part I, Page 229.

²⁵ See Part I, Page 166, II, 1.

PASSCHENDAELE

OCTOBER 7TH to NOVEMBER 20TH, 1917.

GENERAL PLAN OF OPERATIONS.

Nomenclature.

The Allied Operations in the YPRES Area, beginning on June 7th, 1917, and culminating with the Capture of PASSCHENDAELE by the Canadian Corps in November, are generally known as the Third Battle of YPRES. That portion of these Operations in which the Canadian Corps took part is conveniently described as the Second Battle of PASSCHENDAELE.

Stages of the Battle.

This Battle was fought in 4 successive Stages constituting the 6th, 7th, 8th & 9th Phases of the Third Battle of YPRES. Each Phase consisted of an Attack with limited Objectives on a 2-Division Frontage. The Third and Fourth Canadian Divisions carried out Phases VI and VII on October 26th and 30th, respectively. They were then relieved by the First and Second Canadian Divisions, which continued the Advance in Phase VIII and IX on the 6th and 10th November. The intervals between these Stages or Phases, were occupied in Consolidation, and in preparations for the succeeding Attack.

Flanking Corps.

The Canadian Corps was on the extreme Left of the Second Army. The I ANZAC Corps was on the Right of the Canadian Corps during the whole Battle. On the Left, in the Fifth Army Area, were the XVIII Corps for Phases VI and VII and the II Corps for Phases VIII and IX. These Corps were responsible for protecting the Canadian Corps Flanks, during each stage, and attacked simultaneously with the Canadian Corps, when it was necessary to do so, in order to give adequate flank protection.²⁶

Objective.

The Objective of the Canadian Corps Operation was the PASSCHENDAELE RIDGE in the centre of which stands the Village of PASSCHENDAELE. The Village itself had been strongly fortified by the Germans, and the whole Ridge was held in great strength as it commanded enemy territory to the E. beyond ROULEWRS and as far as DIXMUDE to the N. Its possession by us would very considerably weaken the German Position in that portion of the Front. The stubbornness of the enemy Defence during our Attacks, and the frequent Counter-attacks by which they attempted to throw back our Line, bore eloquent testimony to the importance by the Germans to holding the Ridge.

Tactical Conditions: Pill Boxes.

The tactical conditions in this Area, differed widely from those to which the Canadian Corps had grown accustomed during the Spring and Summer of 1917 on the VIMY Front. The nature of the ground was such that deep Dugouts could not be constructed for the protection of the Troops. The Germans had solved this difficulty by constructing strong buildings of re-inforced concrete, above ground. These structures, called Pill Boxes, were usually erected inside already existing buildings and in many cases their position was only revealed when the bricks or other materials were knocked away from the outside by our Artillery. In the course of Operations here, every Farm House had come to be regarded as a possible Strong Point.

Defence System.

There was no connected system of Trenches. Short lengths of Trench were dug, where the ground was suitable; these trenches were often connected by Barbed Wire. Protection for the Garrison was afforded by the Pill Boxes in the vicinity and that portion of the Garrisons not on duty found an effective shelter there. Great numbers of Machine Guns were employed by the Germans in this Defence System; the Guns were fired either through the loop-holes of Pill Boxes or from the shelter of Trenches or Shell-holes close by. These Strong points were found very difficult to deal with. They were placed in commanding

²⁶ Second Army Operation Order No. 9 dated Oct. 21st, 1917.

Positions, and as they presented a small Target, it was almost impossible to destroy them, even with the heaviest Artillery.

Methods of Attack.

The policy adopted in dealing with them was to direct a destructive Bombardment against them 24 to 36 hours before Zero, with the object of shell-shocking the Garrison and destroying its Morale; the Bombardment was followed by continuous and intense Harassing Fire of Field Artillery and Machine Guns, in order to prevent the relief of the Garrison before the Infantry kept as close up to our Barrage as possible, and worked rapidly round to Flanks of these Strong Points. These Tactics minimized our losses very greatly and in some instances, were brilliantly successful.

Area Captured.

The ground over which the Canadian Corps attacked was exceptionally difficult. The Area captured was, roughly speaking, bee-hive in shape. The base, 2700 yds. in length lay N.-W. and S.-E. The right corner of the base rested on the YPRES-ROULERS Railway, at the junction of the Railway and the ZONNEBEKE-PASSCHENDAELE Road: the left corner was at WALLEMOLEN. The Apex was $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile N. of PASSCHENDAELE and 300 yds. E. of the PASSCHENDAELE WESTROOSEBEKE Road. From the centre of the base to the Apex was 3000 yds; this formed the deepest penetration made during the Canadian Corps Operations from October 26th to November 11th.²⁷

In the centre of this Area and coinciding with the inter-Divisional Boundary was the RAVEBEEK, a small Stream with its source at the foot of the PASSCHENDAELE RIDGE. On the Right was the high ground along which ran the ZONNEBEKE-PASSCHENDAELE Road, with the strongly entrenched Spur of CREST FARM jutting out from it towards the RAVEBEEK about 500 yds. W. of PASSCHENDAELE. The chief feature of the left portion of this area was the BELLEVUE SPUR, a Ridge extending along the N. Bank of the RAVEBEEK at right angles to the line of our Advance. The WIELTJE Road followed the high ground of this Ridge through BELLEVUE, MEETCHEELE and MOSSELMARKET.

Obstacles Natural and Artificial.

Cleverly constructed Pill Boxes commanded the Valley of the RAVEBEEK from both Flanks and the entire ground over which our Troops had to pass in the attack. Nature and the Season of the year aided the Defence. The wet season had set in before the Battle of PASSCHENDAELE commenced, and the ground, stirred up by Shell Fire, made movement difficult. The river-bed was choked as a result of Shelling, and the water flowed out over the low ground creating great marshy and impassable tracts. Shell-holes were soon filled with water, and rendered useless for shelter.

Communications.

Communication Trenches could not be dug owing to the condition of the ground, so that all movement backwards and forwards between the Line and Rear Areas took place overland, on walks made of Trench-mats. These walks or Tracks, as they were called, were carried forward with great energy by the Canadian Engineers prior to the commencement of our Operations, and as our Advance progressed, they were continued quite close up behind our Front Line. All Roads communicating with the rear were in a deplorable condition after undergoing 4 months of continuous Artillery Fire.

Completeness of Canadian Corps Victory.

Never were attacking Troops faced with conditions more baffling; never were adverse conditions more cheerfully or more successfully met and overcome. Each stage of the Battle was carried out to time as planned. All Objectives were captured and held. PASSCHENDAELE Village was taken in Phase VIII. The finest example of Co-operation was shown between all Branches of the Service in the face of their common difficulties.

²⁷ See Plate, Opposite p. 129.

RELIEFS AND MOVES FROM FIRST TO SECOND ARMY.

Relief of Canadian Corps.

The first intimation of the intended employment of the Canadian Corps in the Third Battle of YPRES was received on October 7th. On this date the Canadian Corps, with Headquarters at CAMBLAIN L'ABBE, was holding the line with the First and Second Divisions, opposite LENS and MERICOURT, respectively. These 2 Divisions had just completed the Relief of the Fourth and Third Canadian Divisions, respectively, on the previous day. Preparations had already been going on for some weeks for the Capture of SALLAUMINES-MERICOURT by the Canadian Corps, and the squeezing of the Germans out of Lens.

This Operation was immediately abandoned, and arrangements commenced for the transfer of the Corps from the FIRST to the SECOND ARMY. The 2 Divisions out of the Line were selected for the first half of the PASSCHENDAELE Battle. The Canadian Corps was relieved by the V Corps on October 12th and established its Headquarters at POPERINGHE on the 15th.

Move of Third and Fourth Divisions.

The Third and Fourth Divisions, moving N. by Train, Lorries and Marching, were completely established by October 16th in the CAESTRE-HONDEGHEM-HAZEBROUCK Area, 30 miles to the N.W. On October 18th, the Canadian Corps took over the II ANZAC Corps Front, with Headquarters at TEN ELMS CAMP on the North-Western outskirts of POPERINGHE. On the 22nd the Third Division completed the Relief of the New Zealand Division and established its Headquarters at CANAL BANK, 1000 yds. N. of YPRES. On the same day the Fourth Division completed the Relief of the Third Australian Division, with its Headquarters in the RAM, close to the MENIN GATE, YPRES.

Move of First and Second Divisions.

Meantime the First and Second Divisions had remained in the Line on the LENS-MERICOURT Front under Orders of the V Corps. On October 14th, the First Division was relieved by the 59th Division (British) and on the 18th, the Relief of the Second Division by the 48th Division (British) was completed. After a week's rest in the Rear Areas of this portion of the Front the Divisions moved to the rest Area of the SECOND ARMY already vacated by the Third and Fourth Divisions. First Division H.Q. opened at EECKE on October 22nd, Second Division H.Q. at CAESTRE on the 24th. Thus the whole Canadian Corps was in BELGIUM ready for the Attack, 2 days before Operations commenced.

Third Divisional M.G. "Battalion."

The Reliefs and Moves of Divisional M.G. "Battalions" corresponded with the Reliefs and Moves of their Divisions. The Third and Fourth "Battalions" had all Companies out of Line after their Relief by the Second and First "Battalions" respectively, on the night of October 6th/7th. The Third "Battalion" (Major MOORHOUSE), less the 9th Company, was billeted in Villages in the MAGNICOURT Area, the 7th Company, at HOUVELIN, the 8th Company, at BETHONSART, the 15th Company, at BETHENCOURT. The 9th Company remained at AUX RIETZ until October 11th, when it joined the 7th Company in HOUVELIN. On the 14th and 15th, all Companies journeyed to BLEGIUM by Train, the 7th and 8th Companies entraining at SAVY, the 9th and 15th Companies, at TINCQUES. On arrival at their destinations, Companies marched to Billets in the CAESTRE Area. Points of detraining, and Location of Billets were as follows:

Unit	Detrained at	Billeted at
"Battalion" H.Q.	CAESTRE	CAESTRE
7th Company	CAESTRE	Le BREARDE (On HAZEBROUCK St. SYLVESTER CAPPEL Road.)
8th Company	CAESTRE	HONDEGHEM
9th Company	GODEWAERSVELLE	CAESTRE (Farm near by)
15th Company	BORRE	BORRE

Fourth Divisional M.G. "Battalion".

The Fourth "Battalion," after being relieved by the Companies of the First "Battalion" had marched to Billets in GAUGHIN-LEGAL. On October 12th, the "Battalion" Personnel proceeded by Motor Lorries

to HAM-en-ARTOIS, 2 miles N. of LILLERS. On the following day, all Companies marched to HONDEGHEM, a distance of 17 miles. Here the 10th, 11th, 12th and 16th Companies were billeted, in the Village itself and in the houses and barns of neighbouring farms. "Battalion" H.Q. was in HAZEBROUCK at Fourth Divisional H.Q.

First Divisional M.G. "Battalion".

On October 7th, the First "Battalion" was disposed as follows:

Unit	Disposition of Guns	Location of Rear H.Q.
1st Company	8 Guns LENS Sector 8 Guns out of Line	CARENCY
2nd Company	16 Guns out of Line	CARENCY
3rd Company	8 Guns LENS Sector 8 Guns out of Line	CARENCY
13th Company	16 Guns MERICOURT Sector	CARENCY

On October 8th, the 2nd Company relieved the 8 Guns of the 1st Company and 8 Guns of the 3rd Company in the LENS Sector, so that there were now 2 M.G. Companies in the Line on the First Divisional Front and 2 Companies out. The Rear H.Q. and Transport Lines at CARENCY were those taken over from the Fourth "Battalion" on October 6th. This situation continued until the 12th. On the night of the 12th/13th the 2nd Company was relieved by the 174th M.G. Company (British). On the 13th, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Companies moved to new Billets leaving their quarters at CARENCY to the M.G. Units of the Fifty-ninth Division (British). The 1st and 3rd Companies found Billets in HERSIN COUPIGNY, the 2nd Company, in GRAND SERVINS. The 13th Company were relieved in the MERICOURT Sector on the night of October 14th/15th and, on the day following the Relief, joined the 2nd Company at GRAND SERVINS. All Companies made the journey to the SECOND ARMY Area by Road, in 4 stages on 4 successive days. Leaving their Billets on the LENS Front on October 20th, they marched by way of DIVION-l'ECLIME-THIENNES-TANNAY, arriving at Billets in HONDEGHEM Area on the 23rd.

Second Divisional M.G. "Battalion".

The Reliefs and Moves of the Second "Battalion" corresponded, in a general way, with those of the First. On October 7th, the M.G. Situation on the Second Divisional Front, MERICOURT Sector, was as follows: the 4th and 14th Companies were in the Line; the 5th and 6th Companies were billeted in MAISNIL-BOUCHE, where the Transport Lines of all 4 Companies were located. On the 10th, the Companies and all Details out of the Line moved to the camp at AUX RIETZ vacated by the Third M.G. "Battalion." The 5th Company relieved the 14th Company on the night of October 11th/12th. The Second M.G. "Battalion" was relieved a few days later, the 4th Company by the 143rd M.G. Company (British), on the night of 15th/16th, and the 6th Company by the 144th Company (British) on the night of 16th/17th. Upon Relief by these M.G. Units of the Forty-eight Division (British), the Second "Battalion" proceeded to the following Billets in the Rest Area: 4th and 14th Companies, to HOUVELIN, 5th Company to BETHENCOURT, 6th Company to BETHONSART. On October 23rd, all Companies moved by Train to BELGIUM and were billeted there in accordance with the following table:-

Unit	Entrained at	Detrained at	Billeted at
4th Company	LIGNY	GODEWAERSVELDE	CAESTRE
5th Company	TINQUES	CAESTRE	le BREARDE
6th Company	SAVY	CASSEL	HONDEGHEM
14th Company	SAVY	CASSEL	HONDEGHEM

1st C.M.M.G. Brigade.

The 1st C.M.M.G. Bde., with the Borden, Eaton and Yukon Batteries, was the last of the M.G. Units of the Corps to move N. The Brigade made the journey on October 20th, covering in a single day, the entire distance of 42 miles from BARLOIN, their H.Q. on the LENS front, to York Camp, 2 miles E. of POPERINGHE, on the main POPERINGHE-YPRES Road. YORK CAMP remained the Brigade Headquarters throughout the Battle of PASSCHENDAELE.

MACHINE GUN PREPARATIONS.

Special Training.

The Third and Fourth M.G. "Battalions" were established in the HAZEBROUCK-HONDEGHEM-CAESTRE Area by October 16th; by October 22nd, they had taken over the Line from ANZAC Machine Gun Units. The intervening 6 days gave little opportunity for special Training for the Battle of PASSCHENDAELE. All Ranks were in excellent physical condition, after their vigorous Summer on the VIMY Front; efficiency in Machine Gun work was at a high level, as a result of the continual use of the Guns in Minor Operations, daily Harassing Fire, and the HILL 70 Attack. There was, therefore, less need now for all the special Training undertaken prior to the Capture of VIMY RIDGE, when Machine Gun Personnel was less experienced, particularly in the use of Machine Guns for Barrage Fire. Before going into the Line, an opportunity was given to a number of Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers from each Company to view, at Corps Headquarters, a model, Scale 1/400, of the PASSCHENDAELE Area, including the ground over which the Advance was to take place. This served to supplement the study of Maps and information regarding the District, and greatly aided those who saw the model in visualizing the Battle Area. The period in the Rest Area was spent in Drill, in practicing the use of Pack Mules, and, quite generally, in keeping all Ranks fit for the heavy tasks before them.

Infantry Carriers.

32 to 40 Infantry Other Ranks were attached to each Company from the Canadian Corps Reinforcement Camp; these Men were to act as Carriers, to assist the Machine Gun Personnel in getting up supplies of Ammunition to the Guns, and to Forward Dumps which could not be reached by Pack Mule Transport. One Officer and 84 Other Ranks of the Canadian Light Horse were attached to the 1st C.M.M.G. Bde. for the same purpose. As in the VIMY RIDGE Battle, these Infantry Carriers proved indispensable.

Moves to Battle Area.

Movement of Units to the Line from the Rest Area began on October 21st. On this date, the 7th Company (Major WEIR), Third "Battalion," proceeded to YPRES by Train and marched to CAMP "X," about 500 yds. W. of St. JEAN, where they were accommodated in the quarters of the 5th New Zealand Machine Gun Company. On the 21st also, the 10th Company (Major BRITTON), Fourth "Battalion," moved by Bus to the Western outskirts of YPRES and marched through the ruined City to POTIJZE, $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile E. of the MENIN GATE on the YPRES-ZONNEBEKE Road. On October 22nd, the 9th and 15th Companies moved to Camp "X" St. JEAN, whither they were followed, on the 23rd, by the 8th Company. The remaining Companies of the Fourth "Battalion," viz., the 11th, 12th and 16th, moved to POTIJZE on the 22nd.

Fourth "Battalion" Guns Take Over the Line.

The 10th Company was the First Canadian M.G. Unit to take over the Line. On the 21st, immediately after their arrival at POTIJZE, all 16 Gun Crews marched into the Line and relieved the 10th and 11th Australian Machine Gun Companies, 8 Gun Crews to the Right of BEECHAMN, and 8 Crews on ABRAHAM HEIGHTS. On the 22nd and 23rd, the remaining Machine Guns of the II ANZAC Corps were relieved, and additional Machine Guns placed in Positions to give Defence in Depth. In the Fourth Divisional Sector, on the Right of the Corps Frontage, the 16th Company (Major SANSOM) relieved the eight 10th Company Guns at BEECHAM and these moved 500 yds. forward to Positions near HAMBURG. The other 8 Guns of the 16th Company were placed for the Defence of the high ground to the left of ZONNEBEKE STATION, forming the WINDMILL CABARET-DOCHY FARM Ridge. Headquarters of the 10th and 16th Companies were in LEVI COTTAGES, a former German Pill Box.

Third "Battalion" Guns Take Over the Line.

In the Left Sector, the 7th Company relieved the 5th New Zealand Company, in Positions on the GARVENSTAFEL RIDGE, N.W. of Abraham Heights, on the afternoon of October 22nd. On the following day, the 15th Company placed all its 16 Guns in the Line on the N. side of GRAVENSTAFEL RIDGE to the Left of the 7th Company Guns, to protect the Left portion of the Third Divisional Front.

Principles of Employment of Machine Guns.

Preparations for the first Stage of the Battle Phase VI, now began in earnest. The Machine Gun Resources consisted of 166 Guns, composed of the Third and Fourth Divisional Machine Gun

“Battalions,” 64 Guns each, and the 1st Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade with 38 Guns. The Principle of Employment were similar to those governing the use of Machine Guns at VIMY RIDGE. Each attacking Division was supported by a number of 8-Gun Batteries giving Supporting and Barrage Fire. For each stage of the PASSCHENDAELE Battle, Barrage Guns were distributed on the basis of 1 Gun per 30 yds. of Attack Frontage. During the periods intervening between Attacks, Machine Guns were thinned out to 1 Gun for every 50 yds. of Front. The Fire of Barrage Guns was co-ordinated by the Corps Machine Gun Officer. A certain number of Guns were detailed to Brigades, to go forward with the Infantry and assist in Consolidation. All arrangements for these Guns were made by Brigades and Divisions concerned.

Sniping Batteries.

In addition to Barrage and Mobile Guns, Batteries of opportunity, know as Sniping Batteries, were sent forward to assist the Attack. The objects of these Batteries were:

- (1) To give close support, by Direct Fire, to the Infantry in case of Counter-attacks.
- (2) To supplement and stiffen the Defence System of the Area newly captured.
- (3) To engage bodies of hostile Troops within easy Range.
- (4) To engage low-flying enemy Aeroplanes.

1 or 2 Batteries were allotted to each Divisional Front: each Battery consisted of 4 Guns (under the Command of an Officer), as experience had shown this number to be the most effective Unit for dealing with Opportunity Targets at medium and long Range. As a rule Sniping Guns moved forward so as to reach points from which good forward Observation was obtainable, early after the Capture of the Final Objective. When his Guns were in Position, the Officer Commanding a Sniping Battery informed the nearest Infantry Commander of his whereabouts, and, when possible, established Liaison with an Artillery Observation Post.

Control.

Arrangements for Control of Machine Guns were the same, in principle, as obtained in the VIMY RIDGE battle. Barrage and Sniping batteries came, for all purposes, under the control of the Formation whose areas they covered. While the final Barrage always remained the primary consideration, Divisions could allot special Secondary Targets to Barrage Batteries under their control provided that firing directed against these Targets did not interfere with the Final Barrage. Any alterations in the Final Barrage Line were at once reported to Corps Headquarters. Batteries covering a Brigade Frontage formed a Group with a Group Commander at Brigade Headquarters and a Sub-Group Commander with his Headquarters close to the Guns. Communication was established by Runners between the Guns and Buried Cable Head: from here Communication with Brigade, Divisional and Corps H.Q. was by telephone. For Phases VI and VII Mobile Guns were left entirely to Brigades and Infantry Battalions with which they co-operated. Owing to the difficulty experienced in Phase VI and VII in getting early information about these Guns at Rear, an Officer was appointed, in each Divisional Sector, for Phases VIII and IX whose duty it was to visit all Mobile and Sniping Guns as soon as possible after they were in Position and, quite generally, to keep the Divisional Machine Gun Commander informed with regard to these Guns.

S.A.A. Supply; Use of Transport.

One of the heaviest Tasks devolving upon the Machine Gun Units was the getting forward of their S.A.A. supply. The Third and Fourth “Battalions” each took forward and maintained in the forward Dumps 1,500,000 Rounds for the first 2 Stages: 1,000,000 Rounds were maintained by the First and Second “Battalions” for the final Stages of the Attack. As at VIMY the animals of Company Transport Sections were pooled in each “Battalion” to form a Divisional Machine Gun Pack Train. On Officer was placed in charge and was made responsible for keeping up the S.A.A. supply. Conspicuous service was rendered in this work by the following Officers.

First “Battalion”	Lieut. MILNER,	13th Company
Second “Battalion”	Lieut. CREIGHTON,	5th Company
Third “Battalion”	Capt. DICKIESON)	7th Company
	Lieut. DIXON)	
Fourth “Battalion”	Capt. FOWLER	10th Company
	Lieut. RAINBOTH	16th Company

Roads and Dumps.

Owing to the muddy and broken condition of all roads and on account of enemy Shelling directed against them, this work called for a maximum of determination and courage on the part of those in charge of Pack Trains. Cross-country Tracks were quite impassable. On both Divisional Sectors there was but a single way of approach for Transport from the Rear. On the Right all Traffic had to go forward by the YPRES-ZONNEBEKE Road. Pack Transport for the Fourth Divisional Front left this Road at its junction with the YPRES-ROULERS Railway and proceeded from this point by a very muddy third-class Road made passable for mules by the lavish use of Fascines laid under supervision of Canadian Engineers. The end of this Road was at SEINE Corner where the main S.A.A. Dump was established. In the Left Divisional Sector, the Forward Area could be approached only by the planked WIELTJE Road, by way of St. JEAN, WIELTJE, SPREE FARM (1000 yds. S. of St. JULIEN), KANSAS CROSS, GRAVENSTAFEL, etc. For Phases VI and VII Pack Trains could not proceed beyond WIMBLEDON where the chief Forward Dump was established: for the 2 last Stages the main Dump was advanced to WATERLOO. From the main S.A.A. Dumps, Ammunition was carried by hand to more forward Dumps and to the Gun Positions.

Advanced Armourer's Shops.

An important feature of the M.G. preparations was the establishing of an Advanced Armourer's Shop in charge of an Officer, in each Divisional Sector. At each of these, 2 Armourers were placed to effect minor repairs: there was also a supply of Spare Parts which were found of very great use, throughout the Operations, in replacing breakages and Guns destroyed by Shell Fire. In the Right Sector the Advanced Armourer's Shop was at LEVI COTTAGES for PHASES VI and VII and at TYNE COTTAGE for Phase VIII and IX; in the Left Sector, it was situated at NILE HOUSE for the whole Battle.

Supply of Reinforcements.

Special arrangements were made for the supply of Reinforcements. The C.M.G.C. R.D. was situated at DIVION convenient to the VMY Front.²⁸ When the Corps moved N. this Depot was too far away to keep up a constant and immediate supply of Officers and Other Ranks to replace Casualties. To meet the situation a special Advanced Reinforcement Depot was established at YORK CAMP, in the same Lines with, and under the control for Discipline and Rations, of the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade. 150 Other Ranks were maintained here and dispatched to Units in the Line as required. The Advance Depot was formed a few days prior to the beginning of operations.

Reduction of Casualties.

Every effort was made by the Corps Machine Gun Officer in his arrangements for these Operations, to minimize Casualties to Machine Gun Personnel. As at VIMY RIDGE, the Minimum of Personnel was actually with the guns: the remainder were kept in reserve. As soon as the Attack Barrages were fired the Line was thinned out, as many Machine Guns as possible being withdrawn. Also an issue of 2600 empty Belts was made to Machine Gun Units in the Line, with a view to having a sufficient number of filled Belts at each gun Position, at the commencement of the Operation, to enable one gunner to be released from each crew. These Belts were treated as Trench Stores, and handed over on relief. In spite of every effort to avoid them, however, the casualties in these Operations were greater on proportion than those experienced by Canadian Machine Gun Units in any previous Engagement.

Anti Air-Craft Defence.

Careful preparations were made for dealing with enemy low-flying Aeroplanes. One of the most striking characteristics of hostile tactics in this Area was the determined and persistent effort of German Aeroplanes to oversee our Trenches and Preparations, and to bomb our Camp, and Lines of Communication. Prior to occupying the Line, the Canadian Corps issued detailed instructions for Lewis and Machine Gun defence against hostile Aircraft.²⁹ Each infantry and M.G. Unit was made responsible for the A.A. protection of its own Transport Lines. Each Division was instructed to arrange for Lewis and Machine Gun Defences of its forward Areas, by the Infantry and Machine Gun Units holding the Line. Special Units were held off for the Protection of Artillery and Ammunition Dumps. In all these

²⁸ See part I, Page 128.

²⁹ C.C. G810/2520-1 dated 20-10-17.

preparations a careful study was made of the experience lately gained by other troops in the PASSCHENDAELE Area, and in this way many difficulties were overcome and many errors avoided.

INTERVAL BETWEEN TAKING OVER LINE AND PHASE VI.

Harassing Fire.

During the days preceding the first Attack, in the interval between taking over the Line and the Operation itself, Machine Guns in the Line carried out a schedule of Indirect Harassing Fire. Ammunition supply was completed and Barrage Positions constructed for those Guns Firing Supporting and Barrage Fire during the Operation. On October 25th, Lieut. RUTLEDGE, 12th Company, was killed at Barrage Positions.

Infantry Battle Order.

The Battle Order of Brigades Right to Left, was as follows: 10th Brigade, 9th Brigade, 8th Brigade. Attacking Battalions from Right to Left were 46th (10th Bde.), 58th and 43rd (9th Bde.), 4th C.M.R. (8th Bde.). The First Australian Division was on the Right of the Fourth Canadian Division and the Sixty-third Naval Division was on the Left of the Third Canadian Division. The Boundaries and Jumping-off Line are shown on PASSCHENDAELE Operations Map.

Mobile Guns.

Mobile Machine Guns were disposed as follows prior to Zero Hour on October 26th:- On the Fourth Divisional Front, 2 Sections – 8 Guns – under Lieut. WEAVER of the 10th Company (Major BRITTON), were placed between HAMBURG and TYNE COTTAGE. 2 of these Guns were held in Reserve in HAMBURG HOUSE, Lieut. WEAVER's Headquarters; the remaining 6 Guns were in Defensive Positions and ready to move forward with the 46th C.I.Bn. as the situation should require. The 9th Company (Major McFAUL) furnished all the Mobile Guns, detailed to co-operate with the 8th and 9th C.I.Bs. on the Third Divisional Front. 6 of these Guns operated with the 9th C.I.B. on the Right, the remaining 2 with the 8th C.I.B. on the Left. On the 9th C.I.B. Guns, 2 under Lieut. MADGETT, operating with the 58th C.I.Bn. assembled beside the WIELTJE Road near PLENT COTTAGE: the other 4, under Lieut. ELLIS, operating with the 43rd C.I.Bn., assembled in the Jumping-off Trench 400 yds. to the Left. Lieut. SEARLES was in command of the 2 Guns detailed to co-operate with the 4th C.M.R. Bn., on the 8th C.I.B. Frontage, and took up Positions in the Jumping-off Trench. 16 Mobile Guns in all advanced in Support of the entire Attack Infantry Sections were, in some cases, especially detailed for the Local Protection of Machine Guns, e.g., Section of "D" Company, 4th C.M.R., was detailed to accompany the Guns under Lieut. SEARLES.

Sniping Guns.

3 Sniping Batteries of 4 Guns each were employed for the Operation. Lieut. LADLER (10th Company) commanded 1 of these Batteries situated near the Jumping-off Line, immediately in rear of AUGUSTUS WOOD. A second Sniping Battery under Lieut. DRINKWATER (9th Company) took up Positions 50 yds. in front of HAMBURG HOUSE. Both these Batteries were sited so as to command the BELLEVUE SPUR with a view to engaging any Targets of Opportunity which might present themselves during the course of the Operation. The third Sniping Battery, commanded by Lieut. DUTHIE (9th Company) assembled with the 4th C.M.R. Bn. in the Cemetery on the Jumping-off Line, 300 yds. to the Left of WOLF FARM. This Battery was to advance with the Attack and occupy Positions in the captured area from which Opportunity Targets might be engaged.

Barrage Guns General.

Machine Gun Supporting and Barrage Fire was provided on the basis of 1 Machine gun for every 30 yds. of Frontage. Fire Organization Tables were prepared by the Corps Machine Gun Officer who was responsible for co-ordinating the Machine Gun Barrage. Arrangements were also made by him with the XVIII Corps, on the Left, and the I ANZAC Corps on the Right for Co-operating Fire on either Flank.

80 Guns, in all, were employed by the Canadian Corps for Barrage Fire. These were divided, as usual, into 8-Gun Batteries, and were distributed equally between the attacking Divisions, 5 Batteries supporting the Fourth Division, and 5 Batteries, the Third. All 5 Batteries supporting each Division were under the command of a Group Commander, with his Headquarters at Brigade Headquarters. Sub-Group Commanders were appointed with their Headquarters close to the Barrage Gun Positions. In this way a

chain of control was established between the Guns and the Corps Machine Gun Officer, while Brigade and Divisional Commanders also could quickly effect any changes in the Fire Schedule required by the Situation of the Battle.

Fourth Division.

The Fourth Division Batteries were designated and composed at Zero Hour, October 26th, as follows:-

Name of Battery	Unit
No. 1	8 Guns 11th C.M.G. Company
No. 2	(4 Guns 11th C.M.G. Company 4 Guns 12th C.M.G. Company
No. 3	8 Guns 12th C.M.G. Company
No. 4	8 Guns 16th C.M.. Company
No. 5	8 Guns Borden M.M.G. Battery

Batteries 1 to 4 situated roughly on a line 400 yds. W. of SEINE-BEECHAM. The Borden Battery (Capt. NICHOLSON) was in Position on the Right Shoulder of ABRHAM HEIGHTS. Major BRITTON, O.C., 10th Company, was appointed Group Commander with Headquarters at 10th C.I.B., KINK CORNER, Batteries 1 to 4 were under Major CLERK (11th Company), as Sub-Group Commander, with Headquarters at SEINE CORNER.

Third Division.

Barrage Batteries of the Third Division were designated and composed as follows:-

Name of Battery	Unit
No. 6	8 Guns Yukon M.M.G. Battery
No. 7	8 Guns 8th C.M.G. Company
No. 8	(4 Guns 8th C.M.G. Company 4 Guns 15th C.M.G. Company
No. 9	8 Guns 15th C.M.G. Company
No. 10	8 Guns 7th C.M.G. Company

Batteries 6 and 7 formed the Right Sub-Group on positions on the Left Shoulder of ABRAHAM HEIGHTS; Batteries 8, 9, and 10 composed the Left Sub-Group occupying Positions on the Northern Slope of GRAVENSTAFEL RIDGE, to the Left of KOREK, Major PARKES, O.C., 8th Company, was appointed Group Commander with Headquarters at 8th C.I.B., KANSAS HOUSE; Capt. THOMSON, 8th Company, was made Sub-Group Commander and established his Headquarters at KOREK, 250 yds. to the Left of GRAVENSTAFEL, close to the Left Sub-Group.

October 25th and the night of 25th/26th were spent in completing arrangements. Barrage Guns were finished and stocked with S.A.A.; as many belts as possible were filled for these Guns. Stores were brought up to the Advance Armourer's Depots at LEVI COTTAGES and NILE HOUSE: forward S.A.A. Dumps were filled. Sniping Guns took up their Positions and Mobile Guns assembled for the Advance in their allotted places. The allotment of Machine Guns for the various Tasks, during Phases VI and VII, is shown, for the Canadian Machine Gun Units taking part, in the following Table:-

Tasks of Machine Guns – PASSCHENDAELE

Phase VI, October 26th, and Phase VII, October 30th, 1917.

UNIT	Phase VI				Phase VII			
	Barrage	Mobile	Sniping	Reserve	Barrage	Mobile	Sniping	Reserve

1st C.M.G. Bde.	'A' Battery 'B' Battery Borden Battery Eaton Battery Yukon Battery	8 ³⁰ 8 ³¹			8 8 6	8 ³⁰ 8 ³¹			8 6 8
Third Divisional M.G. Bn.	7th C.M.G. Company 8th C.M.G. Company 9th C.M.G. Company 15th C.M.G. Company	8 12 12	8	8 ³²	8 4 4	4 6 8 6	6 2	4 ³⁰ 4	6 8 4 6
Fourth Divisional M.G. Bn.	10th C.M.G. Company 11th C.M.G. Company 12th C.M.G. Company 16th C.M.G. Company	12 12 12 8	8	4	4 4 4 8	4 12 8 8	4 4 6	4	12 4 2
	TOTAL	80	16	12	58	72	18	12	64

Total Available Machine Guns, C.M.G. Corps:- 166

PHASE VI: OCTOBER 26th, 1917.

General; Infantry Attack.

The Attack was launched at 5.40 A.M. on the Fourth Division Front; all Objectives were taken. A great deal of enemy Machine Gun Fire was encountered coming from CREST FARM, HAALEN COPSE and DECK Wood. The 46th C.I.Bn. established themselves early in the day on the Final objective. On the Front of the Third Division heavy and determined opposition was met with at LAAMKEEK, at DAD TRENCH to the Left of LAAMKEEK, and on the Crest of BELLEVUE SPUR. Enemy Machine Gun Fire was very severe and heavy enemy Artillery Fire was directed on the Area. Some of our Troops were obliged to fall back; others took up positions and held out in Shell-holes and captured Pill Boxes. Early in the afternoon the Attack was renewed and the German Resistance overcome. LAAMKEEK Pill Box and DAD TRENCH were taken with their garrison, and our Men forced their way over the Crest of BELLEVUE SPUR, establishing a strong Line somewhat in rear of the Final Objective of the Attack. The captured ground was subjected to vigorous enemy Counter-attack at 4.00 P.M. along the BELLEVUE SPUR. The enemy were caught in our Artillery and Machine Gun Fire and their Attack was broken up, 60 Germans were made Prisoners. At 4.40 P.M. the enemy counter-attacked the Fourth Division and gained a footing in our Line. The Line was completely restored on the following day. The captured ground was consolidated on the night 26th/27th.

Fourth "Battalion" Mobile Guns.

Machine Guns rendered conspicuous service in the day's Fighting. The 46th C.I.Bn. on the Right made good progress, and by 10.00 A.M. had established themselves on the new Line. Lieut. WEAVER (10th Company), in charge of the 8 Mobile Guns co-operating with the Infantry moved 2 Guns up to the Right and 2 Guns to the Centre of the Battalion Frontage. The 2 Right Guns, under Lieut. AIRD were placed in a Sunken Road, 200 yds. to the Right of the ZONNEBEKE-PASSCHENDAELE Road, so as to cover the Right Flank and the low ground to the Left of the Railway, in the neighbourhood of VIENNA COTTAGE. The other 2 Guns, under Corporal CAREY were sited in front of HILLSIDE FARM to command the high ground to the Left of the PASSCHENDAELE Road, and the Left Flank.

German Counter-attack Checked.

Lieut. AIRD's Guns were handled with the utmost skill and daring and did fine execution during the German counter-attack at 4.40 P.M. About 3.30 P.M. the enemy opened a terrific Bombardment on the Sunken Road where the Guns were. After 20 minutes of this, Lieut. AIRD sent all the Gunners to the Junction of the Sunken Road with the PASSCHENDAELE ROAD, where there was less Shelling and a certain amount of shelter. He himself along with Cpl. THURSBY remained at the Guns. Shortly afterwards Fire was opened on the Germans who were seen massing for the counter-Attack in a field near

³⁰ Under Fourth Division.

³¹ Under Third Division.

³² 4 Guns under Fourth Division.

VIENNA COTTAGE about 200 yds. off. Lieut. AIRD operated one Gun, Cpl. THURSBY the other. The Germans scattered and numerous Casualties were observed. When the Guns had been firing for 10 minutes, Lieut. AIRD's Gun was put out of action by a large Shell exploding close to it, and Lieut. AIRD joined Cpl. THURSBY at the other Gun. The Gunners were now ordered to report with the damaged Gun, to Cpl. CAREY at the Centre Gun Positions as they could no longer be used where they were.

Meanwhile the German Counter-attack was developing and the enemy were seen advancing in extended Order. Several Shells exploded near Lieut. AIRD's Gun splashing the Gun and M.G. Belts with mud and it became more and more difficult to maintain Fire. At length the Mechanism became clogged that only single Shots could be fired. Lieut. AIRD continued to operate the Gun until the Germans were within 100 yds. of his Position on the Left. Realizing the danger of being cut off, he withdrew the Gun, with Cpl. THURSBY's help, and mounted it near HILLSIDE FARM along with the other 2 Guns: Cpl. CAREY in charge of these Guns, had already been killed. The German Attack had now been broken up and the 3 Guns were dug in Defensive Positions. Unfortunately, Lieut. AIRD was killed the same night during a heavy enemy Bombardment.

Third "Battalion" Mobile Guns, Right Flank.

On the Third Division Front, where the Fighting was more bitter and continuous, Machine Gunners had many difficult Tasks to perform. Lieut. MADGETT (9th Company), with 2 Guns operating with the 58th C.I.Bn., on the extreme Right of the Third Division, advanced with the Third wave of Infantry. The advance was met with very severe Rifle and M.G. Fire from LAAMKEEK Pill Box and DAD TRENCH, and, after repeated efforts to get forward, the Infantry withdrew to the Jumping-off Line, where they were again established at 7.45 A.M. Lieut. MADGETT's Guns had proceeded about 100 yds. when the Infantry Advance was checked. There was no Field of Fire for the Guns where they had been halted, and it was impossible either to advance or withdraw to a Position from which the Guns could be operated, owing to enemy Machine Gun and Rifle Fire. Lieut. MADGETT decided to make a stand with his 2 Gun Crews. They remained where they were and were eventually relieved when the Infantry attacked successfully at 1.05 P.M. By this time only the Officer and 2 other Ranks were left and they withdrew with their Guns, which were both out of Action.

Centre Guns.

The 4 Guns under Lieut. ELLIS (9th Company), with the 43rd C.I.Bn., in the centre of the Attack, left the Jumping-off Line with the Second Wave. Lieut. ELLIS was wounded in the shoulder after leaving the Jumping-off Line, but refused to go out. On the way forward, 2 of the 4 Guns were put out of Action; Lieut. ELLIS had the other 2 Guns taken forward and, after reconnoitring the ground, placed them in commanding Positions about 400 yds. from the Jumping-off Line, and the same distance from the Corps Left Boundary. These 2 Guns were in Position by 6.30 A.M. When the Line was withdrawn, on the Right, these 2 Guns formed a rallying point; Lieut. ELLIS with his Crews were joined by Lieut. SHANKLAND of the 43rd C.I.Bn. and a few Infantrymen, about 40 in all. When Lieut. SHANKLAND proceeded to his Battalion Headquarters to make a report on the Situation, Lieut. ELLOD took command of his Position. This little Party held out throughout the morning and until the Attack was renewed at 1.05 P.M. Numerous Casualties were inflicted on the Germans attempting to re-organise 250 yds. from the Gun Positions.

When the Position was consolidated, Lieut. ELLIS went out to the Dressing Station, handing over his Guns to the Number One Gunners C.N. SCOTT and F. GALLANT. These Men did excellent work throughout the day. At 10.00 A.M. Fire was opened on a party of the enemy, estimated at 2 Companies, on the WIELTJE Road. Numerous Casualties were inflicted and the party dispersed. At various times throughout the day parties of Germans were engaged and scattered while attempting to assemble for Counter-attacks from MEETCHEELE and FURST FARM. Good Targets were obtained during the enemy Counter-attack at 4.00 P.M.

Left Guns.

The 4th C.M.R. Battalion (8th Bde.) attacked on the Right. Lieut. SEARLES (9th Company) proceeded with his 2 Guns and Crews straight up to the Position previously selected, and had his Guns in action by 7.00 A.M. One Section of "D" Company, 4th C.M.R. Battalion, had been detailed to accompany Lieut. SEARLES as a Guard for his Guns. The Positions occupied were about 250 yds. N. of WOLF COPSE and near the Right of the 4th C.M.R. Frontage. In the Centre, the Infantry had made good progress but the Flanks had been held up by heavy M.G. Fire, and could not get forward. In order to straighten and

improve his Line Major HART, 4th C.M.R., in command of the Troops on the ground, swung his Centre and Left back a short distance and proceeded to Consolidate. This happened at 8 A.M.

Lieut. SEARLES, who was unaware of this plan, and was not notified of the proposed withdrawal found his Guns isolated and unsupported, for they were already dug in front of the new Line and the Infantry had withdrawn through the Gun Positions. Unable to understand the withdrawal of our Troops or to find an Officer to explain it, he took steps to rectify the situation and check what he had good reason to consider unauthorized withdrawal. He collected about 2 Platoons of the 4th C.M.R., led them forward again to a commanding Position and proceeded with Consolidation. While this was going on 2 Platoons of the 1st C.M.R. arrived as Reinforcements and Lieut. SEARLES handed over to their Commanding Officer, Capt. CLARK, acting O.C. "A" Company, 1st C.M.R. Bn. 8 enemy Machine Guns were captured by Lieut. SEARLES's Crews in Pill Boxes near their Gun Positions. The Line occupied under this Officer's direction was consolidated and held.

Reinforcing Guns Sent Up.

In the afternoon, at the request of the G.O.C., 8th C.I.B, 4 Guns of the 8th Company, under Sgt. ROCKE, were sent up to strengthen the Left Flank. They arrived in the Line at 4.00 P.M. and were immediately placed in Position, 2 in the CEMETERY in the Jumping-off Line, close to the Corps Left Boundary, and at WOLF FARM, on the Right Flank of the 8th Left C.I.B., Guns were also sent up on the 9th Brigade Front to replace those destroyed in Action.

Sniping Guns.

The 3 Sniping Batteries met with varied fortune during the day's Fighting. Neither of the right Batteries were able to observe Opportunity Targets on the BELLEVUE SPUR. The Guns under Lieut. DRINKWATER (9th Company) and Lieut. LADLER (10th Company), from Positions in the vicinity of HAMBURH and AUGUSTIS WOOD, respectively, fired on MEETCHEELE and GRAF WOOD during the morning Attack and again during the Third Division Attack in the afternoon. Both Batteries were heavily shelled. Lieut. LADLER was badly shell-shocked in the course of the morning and his Guns were taken over by Lieut. WEAVER.

On the Left Division front, Lieut. DUTHIE (9th Company) moved up from the Jumping-off Line, in rear of the 4th C.M.R. and brought his 4 Guns into Action at the previously selected Position, close to the Left Boundary of the Corps. Shortly after arriving at the Position, Lieut. DUTHIE was wounded and handed over his command of his Battery to Sgt. LOVE. About the same time 2 of the Guns were destroyed, with their Crews. When the Infantry fell back at 8.00 o'clock, Sgt. LOVE withdrew to the Rear. Here they remained until the successful renewal of the Attack in the afternoon, when Sgt. LOVE, after reconnoitring the Line, advanced his Guns again to their original Positions. Throughout the whole Operation this N.C.O. displayed great courage and presence of mind.

Barrage Guns; Fourth Division Front.

The Barrage Guns had a very strenuous time, firing almost continuously throughout the day. When the Attack Barrage was completed all Guns on the Fourth Division Front laid on their S.O.S. Line. At 10:30 A.M., at the request of the Infantry, Major BRITTON (O.C. 10th Company) Group Commander, had Nos. 4 and 5 Batteries open Fire on HAALEN COPSE and CREST FARM Areas, respectively, in an effort to neutralize enemy Rifle and M.G. Fire. The S.O.S. Line was advanced to conform to the Position of the Infantry who had established Posts in front of the Final Objective. Lieut. FOSTER, 11th Company was wounded at No. 1 Battery Position. All Guns responded to the S.O.S. Signal when the Germans counter-attacked at 4.40 P.M. The G.O.C., 10th C.I.B., in his Report on PASSCHENDAELE Operations spoke in the highest terms of the M.G. Fire delivered on this occasion.

"The barrage work of all guns was particularly evident during the counter-attack on the 26th inst., when they responded immediately to the S.O.S. and caused considerable loss to the attacking forces during the period the Artillery failed to respond."

Barrage Guns; Third Division Front.

The Barrage Guns covering the Third Division Front carried out the Program of Fire without serious obstruction. 1 Gun was knocked out but was quickly replaced from the Advanced Armourer's Shop. When the Line withdrew in the early morning, Fire was opened on the S.O.S. Line and continued, intermittently throughout the morning. As soon as the exact situation was known, after the Infantry withdrawal, the S.O.S. Line was rearranged to conform with the new Line. The Guns were fired for the

Infantry Attack at 1.05 P.M., and, during afternoon, Area Shoots were carried out on points where the enemy were reported massing. Approximately 500,000 Rounds were fired during the day by the 5 Barrage Batteries.

INTERVAL BETWEEN PHASE VI AND PHASE VII.

Operations.

A Programme of Harassing Fire was carried out by Guns in Barrage Positions during October 27th, 28th and 29th. Mobile Guns were disposed in the most advantageous Defensive Positions. On the night of 27/28th the Fourth Division Batteries fired in support of the 44th C.I.Bn.'s successful Attack on DECLINE COPSE, an important Position on the extreme Right Boundary of the Corps. No special Barrage was ordered for this Operation but the rate of Harassing Fire was increased at Zero to 4000 Rounds per Gun per hour. 1 Gun of the 12th Company, under Corporal BOOTH, and 1 of the 16th Company, under Corporal DEWAR, went forward with the 44th C.I.Bn., in the Attack.

"They were placed in position in the forward line and did excellent work throughout the following day holding positions."³³

All Barrage Guns in Position carried out Harassing Fire on selected Targets. On October 28th, Lieut. RODNIGHT, 15th Company, was killed at the Barrage Gun Position, and Lieut. HARVIE, 7th Company, was wounded. On October 29th, Lieut. SHIELDS was wounded, and Lieut. STAVELEY gassed; both were 11th Company Officers.

Fourth Division M.G. Reliefs.

On the Fourth Division Front the following Reliefs and replacements were carried out:

- (a) The 8 Mobile Guns and 4 Sniping Guns of the 10th Company (Major BRITTON) were replaced by 1 Section of Sniping Guns from the 12th Company (Major L.F. PEARCE) and 6 Mobile Guns from the 16th Company (Major SANSOM).
- (b) Barrage Batteries Nos. 1 to 4 were partly relieved by their Sections held in Reserve at POTIJZE. No. 5 Battery, composed of the Borden M.M.G. Battery (Capt. NICHOLSON), was relieved by 'A' Battery, 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade (Capt. BROTHERTON).
- (c) The Sniping Battery at HAMBURG, composed of 9th Company Guns, was relieved by a composite Section of 4 Guns, under Lieut. CLARK of the same Company.

Third Division M.G. Reliefs.

On the Front of the Third Canadian Division the following Reliefs and replacements were effected:

- (a) The 8 Mobile Guns of the 9th Company (Major McFAUL) were replaced by 6 Guns of the 7th Company (Major WEIR) and 2 Guns of the 8th Company (Major PARKES).
- (b) 4 Guns of the 15th Company (Capt. HARTLEY) replaced the Sniping Battery of the 9th Company.
- (c) 1 Barrage Battery was withdrawn: No. 7 Battery, composed of the Yukon M.M.G. Battery (Capt. HARKNESS), was relieved by "B" Battery, 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade (Lieut. W. BLACK). Reliefs of the other 3 Barrage Batteries were arranged by the Divisional Machine Gun Commander.

Changes of Command.

Capt. W.G. WILLIAMS, 12th Company, relieved Major BRITTON as group Commander upon Relief of the 10th by the 12th C.I.B., night of October 28th/29th, and moved with 12th C.I.B. Headquarters to BOETHOEK Pill Box. Capt. LOGAN (16th Company) replaced Major CLERK (11th Company) as Sub-Group Commander and established his Headquarters at TYNE COTTAGE.

Major PARKES, O.C., 8th Company, remained at 8th C.I.B. Hdqrs., KANSAS HOUSE, as Group Commander, Major WEIR, O.C., 7th Company, was appointed Liaison Officer for Barrage and Mobile Guns, with Headquarters at 7th C.I.B. Hdqrs., CAPITOL near GALLIPOLI. He was instructed to detail an Officer to go forward immediately after the Attack and ascertain the Location of all Mobile Guns.

³³ 44th C.I.Bn. War Diary, October, 1917.

Capt. HARTLEY (15th Company) relieved Capt. THOMSON (8th Company) as Sub-Group Commander at KOREK.

Composition of Barrage Batteries; Fourth Division Front.

The Fourth Division Barrage Batteries were composed as follows:

Battery	Unit
No. 1	8 Guns 11th C.M.G. Company
No. 2	(4 Guns 10th C.M.G. Company (4 Guns 11th C.M.G. Company
No. 3	8 Guns 12th C.M.G. Company
No. 4	8 Guns 16th C.M.G. Company
No. 5	8 Guns 'A' Bty., 1st C.M.M.G. Bde.

All 5 Batteries were in Position 200 yds. E. of a Line between DASH CROSSING and HAMBURG. Batteries 1 to 4 prepared their Positions on the night of October 28th/29th, and occupied them during the night 29th/30th. No. 5 Battery prepared and occupied their Gun Positions on the 29th/30th prior to the Attack.

Composition of Barrage Batteries; Third Division Front.

The following Batteries supported the Third Division, on October 30th:

Battery	Unit
No. 7	8 Guns 'B' Bty., 1st C.M.M.G. Bde.
No. 8	8 Guns 9th C.M.G. Company
No. 9	(2 Guns 8th C.M.G. Company (6 Guns 15th C.M.G. Company
No. 10	(4 Guns 7th C.M.G. Company (4 Guns 8th C.M.G. Company

These Batteries were situated close to the Jumping-off Line for the Attack on October 26th, 2 Batteries (7-8) being placed in Position 250 yds. to the Right of PETER PAN, and 2 Batteries (9-10) 200 yds. in Rear of WOLF FARM.

S.A.A. Supplies.

Supplies of Ammunition and Water at forward Dumps were replenished by the Pack Trains and man-handled forward to the Gun Positions. Iron Rations for 48 hours were supplied and stored at Sub Group Headquarters. All Barrage Positions were prepared, occupied, stocked with S.A.A., Water, and everything was in readiness for the Operation at Zero Hour, October 30th.

PHASE VIII: OCTOBER 30th, 1917.

The Corps and Divisional Boundaries and Objectives for the Attack are shown on the PASSCHENDAELE Operations Map, Opp. P.129. The Final Objective, or BLUE LINE, corresponded roughly with the Jumping-off Line for the succeeding Attack on November 6th.

Order of Battle.

Phase VII was carried out by the 12th C.I.B., on the Right, the 7th C.I.B., in the Centre, and the 8th C.I.B., on the Left. The Sixty-third Naval Division, XVIII Corps, attacked on the Left of the Canadian Corps. The Order of Battle of Battalions from Right to Left was as follows:-

12th C.I.B.	(Right 85th C.I.Bn. (Centre 78th C.I.Bn. (Left 72nd C.I.Bn.
7th C.I.B.	(Right P.P.C.L.I. (Left 49th C.I.Bn.
8th C.I.B.	Left 5th C.M.R.

Weather.

The Attack was launched at 5.40 A.M., October 30th. The weather had been fine though cloudy, on the 29th and on the night of 29th/30th. This condition greatly facilitated the preparations of our Troops, getting up Stores, and moving to the Assembly Areas. In the early morning of the 30th it was very cold and a strong wind was blowing. At 11 A.M., a rain storm occurred, and rain fell intermittently throughout the day.

Infantry Attack.

The Fourth Division after hard fighting broke through the German Main Line of Resistance and by 6.35 A.M. all Objectives were taken. Heavy Machine Gun Fire was encountered, particularly from the Right Flank, from the KEIBERG SPUR. The 72nd C.I.Bn., by a brilliant Flanking Movement, captured DECK WOOD with its German Garrison. CREST FARM, which had dominated our Position in this Sector was captured. Several enemy Machine Guns taken in this Strong Point were used with good effect by our own Men. The Third Division met with determined resistance at many points but succeeded in capturing most of their Objectives. GRAF MEETCHEELE, VAPOUR FARM and SOURCE FARM were occupied and consolidated.

Counter-Attacks.

Several Counter-attacks were delivered by the Germans with great determination during the day, but they completely failed to gain a footing in the captured ground. At 8.00 A.M., the Third Division was counter-attacked by the enemy Support Battalion coming from the direction of MOSSELMARKT. The Germans were caught by our Artillery and Machine Gun Barrage, and Direct Fire was brought to bear on them from our Machine Guns on CREST FARM. The Attack was dispersed and the enemy were seen retiring in disorder to the N. of PASSCHENDAELE. At 10.00 A.M., a Second Attack delivered against our Troops in MEETCHEELE was broken up; further attempts to dislodge our Men, one at 11.45 A.M., and one again at 5.00 P.M., met with no more success than the others. The captured ground was organized for Defence and the Line consolidated.

Fourth "Battalion" Mobile Guns.

The Mobile Machine Guns of the Fourth M.G. "Battalion," assembled with the attacking Infantry Battalion prior to Zero Hour, were distributed as follows: 2 Guns of the 12th Company, under Lieut. LEACH, with the 85 C.I.Bn.; 2 Guns of the 12th Company under Lieut. FLEMING, and 2 Guns of the 16th Company, under Sgt. R.H. BURBRIDGE, M.M., with the 78 C.I.Bn.; 4 Guns of the 16th Company under Lieut. MONTAGNON, with the 72nd C.I.Bn.

Gun Crews advanced with the Rear Waves of Infantry. Lieut. LEACH early got his Guns into Positions covering the Right Flank. Of the work of these Guns the O.C., 85th C.I.Bn. writes:-

"the Vickers Guns ... were most helpful during the whole operation particularly during consolidation and holding."³⁴

Lieut. FLEMING's Guns covered the Right Flank of the 78 C.I.Bn., advancing to good Defensive Positions, where they were dug in. Shortly after arriving here 1 Gun was destroyed. The Officer was later wounded and evacuated. Sgt. BURBRIDGE (16th Company), in command of 2 Guns operating on the Left Flank of the 78th C.I.Bn., fought his Guns well throughout the day and inflicted heavy Casualties on the enemy during their Counter-attacks. At the end of the day only 4 Men were left of his 2 Gun Crews.

Early in the day the G.O.C., 12th C.I.B. requested 4 more Guns to be sent forward to strengthen the Right of the Brigade Line where there was a Gap between the Canadian and Australian Positions. These Guns were supplied by the 12th Company from their Sniping and Barrage guns: they were divided between Lieut. LEACH and Lieut. Fleming, and placed in Position to the Right of PASSCHENDAELE Road opposite the Line VIENNA COTTAGES—GRUN.

At 5 P.M., on the following day, Lieut. LEACH's Guns were discovered apparently, by hostile Aircraft, which were very active and a heavy concentration of Artillery Fire was directed against them. 2 Guns were destroyed by direct hits, Lieut. LEACH was carried out, suffering from severe Shell-shock, and his Crews suffered heavy casualties.

³⁴ 85th C.I.Bn. Report on PASSCHENDAELE Operations.

Fine Co-operation with Infantry.

The Machine Guns under Lieut. MONTAGNON, 16th Company, were handled with exceptional brilliance and courage by that Officer. In conjunction with the O.C. 72nd C.I.Bn., it was arranged that certain of these Guns should fire during the first Stages of the Attack, on selected Targets, and that when opportunity offered, Guns should be brought up to forward Defensive Positions in the captured ground. This plan was carried out. 4 Guns as arranged gave Indirect Fire on the Area on the Left Flank of the Battalion beginning at Zero Hour.

“As soon as it was no longer possible to fire on this area, Lieut. B.C. MONTAGNON moved two Vickers Guns forward and placed them on a very commanding position on CREST FARM, from which not only the front of our own Battalion could be enfiladed but also that of the Right and Left (Third Division) Battalions. These latter (Guns) were in position at 7.30 A.M. The work of the Machine Gunners attached from the 4th Canadian Machine Gun Battalion is worthy of the highest praise.”³⁵

Death of Lieut. MONTAGNON, M.C.

Lieut. MONTAGNON displayed great personal courage in getting his Guns forward and after they were in Position. The Gun Emplacements were on the forward Slope of CREST FARM and, with the Germans, less than 200 yds. away, were exposed to Machine Gun and Rifle Fire, as well as to the enemy's Artillery Fire. This Officer moved about among his Gun Crews quite regardless of his own safety, seeking to cheer his Men and encouraging them to constant effort. He was unfortunately severely wounded by Shell-Fire during an enemy Bombardment in the course of the day. After being hit, he crawled to one of the Guns and refused to leave it; he thought the Germans were attempting a Counter-attack and declared he would operate the Guns himself. He was carried out by a Stretcher Party and died in Hospital a fortnight later. Lieut. MONTAGNON was posthumously awarded a Military Cross for his conspicuous gallantry in this Action.

Command of Lieut. MONTAGNON's Guns fell upon Sgt. CRITES, who carried on, during the succeeding days with courage and determination.

Third “Battalion” Mobile Guns.

Mobile Guns of the Third Divisional M.G. “Battalion” assembled with Infantry Battalions as follows: on the Right, Lieut. HUGH McKENZIE, D.C.M. (7th Company), with 2 Guns, assembled with the P.P.C.L.I.; in the Centre, were 2 Guns under Sgt. H. HOWARD, M.M. (7th Company); Lieut. G.F. DOUGLAS (8th Company) commanded 2 Guns co-operating with the 5th C.M.R., on the Left.

Gallant Death of Lieut. McKenzie, V.C., D.C.M.

Lieut. McKENZIE started at Zero Hour from the Right Flank, and went forward in a series of bounds, making a detour to the Right to avoid a heavily shelled Area. After advancing about 400 yds. the Infantry were brought to a halt by Machine Gun and Rifle Fire from a Pill Box to their Left front on the Crest of BELLEVUE SPUR.

“Lieut. McKENZIE, after first handing over a map to A11078 Corporal T. HAMPSON and instructing him as to his next move stated his intention of going forward to lead an Attack against the Pill Box which was holding them up. The Position in the which the Guns were left was shortly afterwards shelled heavily and Corporal HAMPSON moved forward to about D.5.c. Central and seeing Lieut. McKENZIE said that all the Officers of the Company of P.P.C.L.I. had become Casualties, and that he had reconnoitred the ground and was about to lead the men forward. He had apparently detailed parties to attack from different flanks, but after a few yards advance he was seen to fall, and was found later shot through the head. Meanwhile the Pill Box had been taken.”³⁶

Lieut. McKENZIE received the posthumous award of the Victoria Cross for his outstanding gallantry.

³⁵ 72nd C.I.Bn., “Report on PASSCHENDAELE Operations.”

³⁶ Third Cdn. Divl. M.G. “Battalion,” “Report on PASSCHENDAELE Operations.”

Guns Placed in Forward Position.

After his Officer's death, Cpl. HAMPSON along with L/Cpl. S.H. Copping

“went forward to reconnoitre the ground and found that the Infantry has established posts just over the ridge. He then moved his two guns to approximately D.5.c.4.7. (just to the Right of the WIELTJE Road, about midway between BELLEVUE and MEETCHEELE) where he could command the left flank and have a good field of fire to the right. He tried also to get in touch with guns on his left, but he could find no trace of them.”³⁶

Meantime these Guns, in the Centre of the Third Division Attack, had moved off at Zero Hour under Sergeant HOWARD. They left the Jumping-off Line with the First Wave of the 49th C.I.Bn. starting

“from the left of the two pill boxes near the BELLEVUE. They advanced about 200 yds. and waited until the third wave had passed them. From there on the M.G. and Shell fire was very heavy and they advanced from Shell-hole to Shell-hole suffering very heavy Casualties on the way. Sgt. HOWARD was mortally wounded and they were led by a No. 1 till he too became a Casualty. They finally came to a stand with only 4 gunners and 3 carriers to man the 2 guns, and only 2 belt-boxes per gun left. Their position was on a forward slope and within 150 yards of the enemy”³⁶

to the Left of the WIELTJE Road, midway between FURST FARM and MEETCHEELE. The Guns were moved to commanding ground which was less exposed and at night 2 Men went back to Advanced Company H.Q. to report. At this time there were but 4 Men left of the 2 Gun Crews.

On the morning of October 30th, the total Strength of the 4 Mobile Gun Crews of the 7th Company was 1 Officer and 27 Other Ranks: by night-fall Lieut. McKENZIE was dead and only 11 Other Ranks were left with the Guns; the remainder were either killed or wounded.

Lieut. DOUGLAS, in command of the 2 8th Company Guns on the Left of the Attack, acting in conjunction with the O.C. 5th C.M.R., placed his Guns in or near the Jumping-off Line, about 200 yds. N.-E. WOLF COPSE, in Positions which commanded the whole Front.

“They were used entirely for covering fire for Advance of Infantry, and protective fire when Infantry reached their objective. They also did much effective work by direct observation, dispersing with casualties a party of the enemy bringing a Machine Gun into action near VINE COTTAGE, and engaging enemies parties during the day by direct fire with good results.”³⁶

Towards evening these Guns were used to cover an Advance of British Troops on the Left Flank, but the results of their Fire could not be seen owing to darkness.

Sniping Guns.

The Sniping Batteries for this Operation were situated as follows:-

4 Guns of the 9th Company, under Lieut. CLARK, between HAMBURG and AUGUSTUS WOOD: 4 Guns of the 12th Company under Corporal MacMILLAN at HEINE HOUSE. Both these Batteries, in the Fourth Divisional Area, were sited to engage Targets on BELLEVUE SPUR to the Left Front. The 3rd Battery from the 15th Company, commanded by Lieut. H.F. SMITH, took up Positions on the high ground about 200 yds. to the Left of BELLEVUE and about the same distance in rear of the Jumping-off Line. Owing to poor visibility neither of the 2 right Batteries were able to engage Targets of Opportunity during the day's Fighting. Both Batteries fired on selected Targets of Opportunity during the day's Fighting. In the Course of the morning, Cpl. MacMILLAN's Guns were moved over to the Right Flank and placed in forward Defensive Positions.

Lieut. Smith's Guns had some excellent Targets.

“Just after Zero hour good shooting was done on enemy seen on the sky-line of the ridge running from pill-boxes and shelters. Enemy shelling was very heavy on the area where this battery was placed, but by keeping only two men at the guns and the remainder in the pill-boxes many casualties were avoided. In the earlier part of the action observation was impossible on account of the smoke, but later several Targets were engaged with good results. Enemy planes were also engaged on the 30th and 31st October. Two guns were knocked out by Shell-fire on the 30th October, early in the action. About 2000 rounds S.A.A. were fired by this Battery at direct fire Targets and enemy planes.”³⁶

M.G. Barrage.

The Guns firing Barrage suffered very heavily on October 30th. No stronger proof could be had of the effectiveness of our Machine Gun Barrage Fire than the attention which the enemy gave to locating and dealing with our Barrage Batteries. It would seem that low-flying Aeroplanes were especially detailed by the German High Command to locate our Battery Positions and communicate their Location to their Artillery.

Fourth Division Barrage Batteries.

On the Fourth Division Barrage Front the Barrage Guns opened Fire and carried on according to Fire Instructions issued. 1 hour after Zero, however, the enemy put down a very heavy Barrage which inflicted heavy Casualties and destroyed or buried a large number of Guns. Batteries 1 to 4, after losing 6 Guns, managed to move to the rear and take up new Positions in the vicinity of SEINE. Of these 4 Batteries, that of the 16th Company suffered most severely. Lieut. GAUVREAU, in charge, was killed by Shell Fire shortly afterwards. Lieut. BALL of the same Company was badly gassed and shell-shocked. 5 Other Ranks were killed and 9 wounded. Lieut. FRENCH (15th Company) took command of the Battery, ably re-organized the Gun Crews, and got the Guns into Action again in their new Position at SEINE CORNER. Lieut. BARBER-STARKEY, 10th Company, Lieuts. CONNOLLY and JOHNSTON, 11th Company, and Lieuts. BEVAN and DUNCAN, 12th Company, carried out the difficult Task of moving their Batteries to new Positions under heavy enemy Shelling and appalling conditions of ground and weather. Low-flying enemy Aeroplanes fired on the Crews while carrying their guns to the Rear. As a result of the loss of Guns it was necessary to redistribute the Target Areas among those that remained. By 2.00 P.M. the 26 remaining Guns were in Action in new Positions.

Battery No. 5 (1st C.M.M.G. Brigade) was completely disabled in a very short time. Capt. BROTHERTON, O.C. the Battery, had been killed while reconnoitring his Battery Positions the night previous to the Attack. Lieut. YOUNG, sent up as a reinforcing Officer, was wounded early in the day; 7 Other Ranks were killed, 14 wounded by Shell fire, and 6 gassed. Lieut. GILLMAN, who was left in charge, although himself slightly wounded, and suffering severely from enemy gas, carried on admirably and, having only 10 Men left, very capably withdrew these to ABRAHAM HEIGHTS, taking the 8 Guns and 1 Tripod.

Third Division Barrage Batteries.

The Programme of Firing as laid down was carried out during the Attack by Barrage Guns covering the Third Division.

“At 10.00 A.M. 30th October, enemy planes drove our planes back and flying low over Batteries No.1 and 2 (i.e. 7 and 8) directed Artillery which shelled these batteries heavily with 5.9” and 8” shells. This concentration was so heavy and sudden and the condition of ground on both sides of the Battery so marshy that the guns and personnel were greatly reduced before the Batteries could be moved. Only two guns were left in action in each Battery. No. 1 (‘B’ Battery, 1st C.M.M.G. Bde.) had only one officer and 11 O.R.’s left, and No. 2 (9th Company), 1 Officer and 16 O.R.’s.”

“Nos. 3 and 4 (i.e. 9-10) were laid on the whole S.O.S. Line while new positions were located at D.9.b.2.2.³⁷ barrage lines worked out, and guns and reinforcements brought up and placed in position. By 7.00 P.M. all four Batteries were complete and again in action. About 1 P.M. No. 3 Battery (2 Guns 8th Company, 6 Guns 15th Company) was heavily shelled, but though they suffered heavy casualties, they remained in action throughout the whole operation, the supernumary officer from No. 4 Battery being put in command, both Officers of No. 3 Battery being casualties. No. 4 Battery (4 Guns each from 7th and 8th Companies) was heavily shelled, but they also remained in action throughout the operation. Three guns of this Battery were put out of action by shell fire, but owing to the proximity of the advanced Armourer’s Depot, no gun was out of action more than 30 minutes.”

“Stoppages were mainly caused by wet and dirty belts in spite of the greatest precautions. Stoppages caused through breakages were few. Telephone communication was kept up throughout between Group H.Q. at KOREK and No.’s 3 and 4 Batteries. Lines to Batteries No.

³⁷ About 800 yds. to the Rear, just to the Right of CALGARY GRANGE.

1 and 2 were frequently out. S.A.A. expended by the Barrage Group (32 Guns) throughout this operation was 350,000 rds.³⁸

Of the Casualties suffered, Lieut. FENWICK, 7th Company, and Lieut. COLLINS, 9th Company were killed. No. 8 Battery (9th Company), had 8 Other Ranks killed and 12 wounded. In No. 7 Battery, Lieut. BRUNEAU, 'B' Battery, 1st C.M.M.G. Bde., was wounded.

No. 7 Battery ('B' Battery, 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade) was relieved by the Eaton M.M.G. Battery, under Capt. G.T. SCROGGIE, on the night of 30th/31st.

Effectiveness of M.G. Barrage.

In spite of the temporary disorganization of our Barrage Batteries during this Operation, their Fire was of great service to the Infantry in the actual Attack, and subsequently in warding off Counter-attacks. The Officer Commanding the 72nd C.I.Bn. referred in highest terms, in his Report, to the Machine Gun Barrage. It was also remarked by Officers Commanding Infantry Units in the Line that, during the frequent enemy Counter-attacks following our Operations, our Machine Guns were invariably the first to begin firing in answer to the S.O.S. Signal. Information from Prisoners taken on October 30th confirms the effectiveness of our Barrage Fire.³⁹ Prisoners taken on November 2nd stated that an Attack of 2 Companies at 5.00 A.M. that day was stopped by our M.G. and Artillery Fire.⁴⁰

INTERVAL BETWEEN PHASE VII AND PHASE VIII.

Operations October 30th to November 2nd.

Between Phases VII and VIII there was an interval of 6 days. In this interval the Third and Fourth Divisions were relieved by the First and Second Divisions, who carried out the last 2 Phases of the Battle. In the 3 days following the Operation, and prior to handing over the Line, there was considerable activity, both of ourselves and the enemy. There were isolated Counter-attacks by the enemy on the Fourth Division Front throughout the 31st: One Counter-attack was attempted against the Third Division at 3.20 A.M. on the same day. Efforts were directed by our Troops towards strengthening and improving our Line. At 1.15 A.M., November 2nd, a party of the 1st C.M.R. attacked and captured VANITY HOUSE near the Corps Left Boundary. On this day also the Fourth Division Posts S. of PASSVHENDAELE were advanced and GRUN occupied. Our Barrage Machine Guns in this period fired in answer to our S.O.S. Signals, and carried our Harassing Fire. Mobile Guns remained in Defensive Positions.

First and Second Divisions in Rest Area.

While the Third and Fourth Divisions had been engaged in the Operations of the 6th and 7th Phases, the First and Second Division were in the Rest Area.⁴¹ During this time a close Liaison was maintained between these Divisions and their opposite Divisions in the Line. All details of the Operation from day to day, were communicated to Brigades and were closely studied in preparation for Phases VIII and IX. All information was made use of which could in any way assist in forming a plan of Attack.

Infantry Reliefs.

At the conclusion of Phase VII these Divisions moved up into the Battle Area and relieved the Third and Fourth Divisions. The 4th C.I.B. relieved the 12th C.I.B. in the Line on the night of November 2nd/3rd; on the night of the 3rd/4th the 7th and 8th C.I.Bs. were relieved in the Line by the 3rd C.I.B. Command of the Right Divisional Sector passed to the G.O.C. Second Division, on November 3rd, at 11.00 A.M. The G.O.C. First Division assumed command of the Left Divisional Sector at 11.00 A.M., November 4th.

³⁸ Third Cdn. Divl. M.G. "Battalion" "Report on PASSCHENDAELE Operations."

³⁹ See Cdn. Corps Summary of Intelligence, Oct. 31st/Nov. 1st, 1917.

⁴⁰ See Cdn. Corps Summary of Intelligence, Nov. 2nd/3rd, 1917.

⁴¹ See Page 56

First M.G. "Battalion" moves to Battle Area.

Machine Gun Reliefs took place prior to the Reliefs of Infantry Units. On October 31st, the following units of the First Divisional M.G. "Battalion" (Major WATSON, D.S.O.) moved by Bus from HONDEGHEM to YPRES:-

1st C.M.G. Company (Major LALOR, M.C.)	2 Sections
2nd C.M.G. Company (Major STEWART)	1 Section
3rd C.M.G. Company (Capt. MORRIS)	3 Sections
13th C.M.G. Company (Major KAY, M.C.)	3 Sections

On arrival at YPRES these Details marched, under the command of Major LALOR, to "X" Camp, where they were accommodated in the Lines of their opposite Companies of the Third M.G. "Battalion." The Gun Limbers of these Sections and the Transport necessary for their requirements proceeded by Road the same day. The remainder of the Personnel of Companies moved by Bus to Ypres and marched from there to Camp "X," on November 1st, their Transport going by Road. "Battalion" H.Q. moved to CANAL BANK on November 2nd.

First M.G. "Battalion" Takes over Line.

On November 1st, the Sections which moved to Camp "X" on the preceding day relieved Third M.G. "Battalion" Guns in the Left Divisional Sector as follows:-

- (a) Mobile Guns. 8 Guns of the 1st Company relieved 6 Guns of the 7th Company and 2 Guns of the 8th Company in forward Positions. Capt. DONALD (1st Company) was in command of these Guns and also acted as Liaison Officer at Brigade H.Q., at CAPITOL.
- (b) Sniping Guns. 4 Guns of the 2nd Company, under Lieut. LAING, relieved 4 Guns of the 15th Company near WOLF COPSE.⁴²
- (c) Barrage Guns.

Battery	No. of Guns	Composition	Unit Relieved
No. 8	8	8 Guns 3rd Company	9th Company
No. 9	8	(4 Guns 3rd Company 4 Guns 13th Company	(2 Guns 7th Company 6 Guns 8th Company
No. 10	8	8 Guns 13th Company	15th Company

Major KAY, O.C. 13th Company, relieved Capt. HARTLEY, O.C. 15th Company, as Sub-Group Commander at KOREK.

Second M.G. "Battalion" Moves and Takes Over Line.

The Second M.G. "Battalion" (Major GOODFELLOW, M.C.) moved from CAESTRE to YPRES by Train, on November 2nd. Companies took over the Transport Lines of their opposite Companies of the Fourth M.G. "Battalion" at POTIJZE. On the same day the following Reliefs were carried out in the Right Divisional Sector:-

- (a) Mobile Guns. The 4th Company (Major W.M. PEARCE) relieved all the Fourth "Battalion" Mobile Guns, viz., 6 of the 16th Company and 2 of the 12th Company. The other 2 Mobile Guns of the 12th Company has been relieved by Australian Guns on the previous night, when the I ANZAC Corps took over a One-Battalion Frontage from the 12th C.I.B. Right. 2 Mobile Guns of the 4th Company were held in Reserve at TYNE COTTAGE. Major W.M. PEARCE was in command of Mobile Guns with his Headquarters at TYNE COTTAGE, Lieut. LAURIE (4th Company), in command of 4 Mobile Guns, was killed by Shell Fire on the way into the Line, and command of his Guns fell upon Sgt. E.J. WHITE. This N.C.O. showed great initiative and judgement, while in charge of the Section, during the completion of Relief and the following days.
- (b) Sniping Guns. No Sniping Guns were placed in Position on the Right Division Sector at the time of this Relief. The 4 12th Company Sniping Guns at HEINE HOUSE had been sent to

⁴² See Page 85.

Forward Defence Positions, on October 30th,⁴³ and on the night of October 31st/November 1st the 9th Company Guns at HAMBURG had been withdrawn.

(c) Barrage Guns.

No. of Guns	Composition	Unit Relieved
4	5th Company	16th Company
4	6th Company	12th Company
12	14th Company	(2 Guns, 11th Company (4 Guns, 10th Company

The Guns occupied Positions at SEINE CORNER. Capt. GRANTHAM, O.C. 6th Company, relieved Capt. LOGAN (16th Company) as Sub-Group Commander at TYNE COTTAGE.

Third and Fourth M.G. "Battalions" To Rest Area.

Upon Relief, the Units of the Third and Fourth M.G. "Battalions" proceeded to the Rest Area. The 7th, 8th, 9th and 15th Companies spent the night of November 1/2nd at Camp "X," and moved, on the 2nd, by Train, to ABEELE. From here each Company marched independently to Billets which were widely scattered in the Area between the ABEELE-POPERINGHE Road and WATOU. The Personnel were accommodated in Tents and Barns. Upon Relief, on November 2nd, the 10th, 11th, 12th, and 16th Companies remained during the night at POTIJZE and proceeded by Train from YPRES to CAESTRE, where they were billeted together in Tents.

Preparations for Phase VIII.

After taking over the Line, the First and Second Divisions were busily engaged in preparations for the impending Attack. Preparatory Barrages were fired by our Artillery and invariably replied to heavily by the enemy. Hostile Artillery also shelled our Forward and Artillery against the 4th C.I.B. just on completion of their taking over the Line, on November 3rd. After severe Fighting this Attack was driven off. Some Prisoners were taken. Our S.O.S. was responded to at 4.00 A.M., on November 4th; the enemy shelled our Line heavily till 6.45 P.M., but no Counter-attack developed. Harassing Fire was carried out nightly by our Artillery and Machine Guns.

During these days Machine Gun preparations were energetically pushed forward. Divisional M.G. Pack Trains and parties of Carriers filled the S.A.A. Dumps and took forward all Stores of drinking Water, Oil, Spare Parts, etc., required for the Operation. Barrage Positions were reconnoitred and prepared. Duties and Tasks were allotted and Instructions issued.

Boundaries Objectives and Ground.

The Jumping-off Line and Canadian Corps and Inter-Divisional Boundaries are shown on PASSCHENDAELE Operations Map XXX. The Village of PASSCHENDAELE itself was included in the Objectives of the Second Division. The ground over which the Second Division Attack was to be made was high and included comparatively little marshy ground. On the Right Flank of the First Division large tracts of mud and water and in front of the Centre and Left the ground was practically impassable for Infantry. The only good ground was the narrow BELLEVUE-MEETCHEELE Spur which was 350 yds. wide at its narrowest point W. of MEETCHEELE. The line of Advance of the First Division, therefore, lay along the Spur from GRAF-MEETCHEELE, avoiding the wet ground to the Left in the GOUDBERG VALLEY. A subsidiary Attack was made against VINE COTTAGE on the Right, starting from VANITY HOUSE.

Action of Flanking Corps.

As in Phases VI and VII, Flanking Corps assisted the Canadian Corps in their Operations. The I ANZAC Corps on the Right kept a heavy Fire of Shrapnel, Machine Guns and Heavy Artillery on the KEIBERG SPUR and EDDY HEIGHTS during the Attack and Consolidation, and also blinded this locality with Smoke. The II Corps, on the Left, similarly fired on the whole of the VAT COTTAGE SPUR up to HILL 52. Both these Corps continued our Artillery and Machine Gun Barrage on their own Frontage, simulating an Attack at the same time. Subsidiary Attacks were carried out by Corps further S.

⁴³ See Page 81.

Order of Battle.

The Battle Order of Brigades and Battalions from Right to Left was as follows:-

5th C.I.B		26th C.I.Bn.
	(Right	27th C.I.Bn.
6th C.I.B.	(Centre	31st C.I.Bn.
	(Left	28th C.I.Bn.
	(Right	1st C.I.Bn.
1st C.I.B.	(Centre	2nd C.I.Bn.
	(Left	3rd C.I.Bn.

Employment of Machine Guns.

The Principles of Employment of Machine Guns remained the same as in the previous Phases. Minor changes were made in applying these Principles.

Assembly of Second Division Mobile Guns.

16 Mobile Guns were employed on the Second Divisional Front. 9 Guns were given an entirely defensive role. They were placed in Forward Positions prior to Zero Hour and remained there throughout the Operation. 6 of these were supplied by the 5th Company and 3, by the 6th Company. 7 Guns went forward for Consolidation in the captured Area, assembling prior to Zero as follows: 2 Crews of the 5th Company and 1, of the 6th, commanded by Lieut. GIBSON (5th Company), with the 26th C.I.Bn., on the extreme Right of the Corps Frontage: 2 Crews of the 6th Company, under Lieut. TUCKER, with the 27th C.I.Bn., and the other 2 Mobile Crews, under Lieut. H.J.L. PEARCE, with the 28th C.I.Bn., on the Left Front of the Division. Major W.M. PEARCE, O.C., 4th Company, was in charge of all Mobile Guns, with his H.Q. at TYNE COTTAGE, near Buried Cable Head.

Assembly of First Division Mobile Guns.

8 Mobile Guns of the 1st Company were placed under Orders of the G.O.C. 1st C.I.B. Lieut. HEATH (1st Company) was put in charge of these Guns. 6 of them under Lieut. TREBILCOCK assembled with the 1st C.I.Bn. on the Right, and 2, under Lieut. VINING, with the 3rd C.I.Bn. on the extreme Left of the Corps Attack. Lieut. HENRY, with H.Q. at KOREK, was responsible for maintaining LIAISON between Mobile Guns and Brigade H.Q.

Sniping Guns.

No Sniping Guns were employed by the Second Divisional M.G. "Battalion." 4 Guns of the 2nd Company (Major STEWART), under Lieut. McPHERSON, took up Positions on CREST FARM on November 4th, and were instructed as follows:-

"During the initial stages of the attack the Battery will be In Action on the MEETCHEELE Spur; a vigilant watch will be kept, and fire will be opened up on the slightest sign of enemy movement."⁴⁴

M.G. Barrage Batteries.

The Machine Guns available for Massed Action were:-

Second Cdn. Divl. M.G. "Battalion"	32 Guns
First Cdn. Divl. M.G. "Battalion"	32 Guns
1st Cdn. M.M.G. Brigade	16 Guns
TOTAL Cdn. Corps	80 Guns
Right Flank, 1st ANZAC Corps	26 Guns
Left Flank II Corps	8 Guns
Grand TOTAL	114 Guns

The Tasks assigned to Machine Gun Barrage Batteries during the 8th Phase were as follows:-

⁴⁴ 1st Cdn. Div'l. M.G.Bn. O.O. No.9, dated Nov. 5th, 1917.

- (a) To participate in the rolling barrage during the attack in accordance with the Artillery Programme.
- (b) To neutralize by heavy concentrated fire areas and localities from which hostile Machine Gun Fire would originate.
- (c) To establish a protective barrage in front of the final objective.⁴⁵

Co-operation of Flanking Corps.

The Corps Machine Gun Officer, Lt.-Col. BRUTINEL, arranged for M.G. Co-operation of the II ANZAC Corps on the Right and the II Corps on the Left, as follows:-

“The I ANZAC Corps have agreed to prolong the Canadian Corps Machine Gun Barrage from ... to ... with a Machine Gun Battery of 8 Machine Guns: this Battery will be designated X Battery. They will also provide 18 Machine Guns to neutralize observation and hostile fire from EDDY HEIGHTS and keep a Sniping Battery of 3 Machine Guns on observation at ... X Battery will remain in action for 48 hours after Zero Hour. All necessary ammunition for X Battery and I ANZAC Sniping Battery will be drawn from the Second Canadian Division Forward S.A.A. Dumps. The II Corps have agreed to provide a M.G. Battery of 8 Machine Guns to neutralize observation and hostile fire from the VAT COTTAGE SPUR.⁴⁶

Composition and Organisation of Batteries.

The Canadian M.G. Batteries firing Barrage were designated and composed as follows:-

Second Division.

Battery	No. of Guns	Composition
No. 1	8	8 Guns, 14th C.M.G. Company
No. 2	8	(4 Guns, 14th C.M.G. Company 4 Guns, 6th C.M.G. Company
No. 3	8	8 Guns, 4th C.M.G. Company
No. 4	8	(4 Guns, 4th C.M.G. Company 4 Guns, 4th C.M.G. Company
No. 5	8	8 Guns, Borden M.M.G. Battery

Nos. 1 and 2 were situated 100 yds. S. of AUGUSTUS Wood; Batteries 3, 4, & 5 were in Position on either side of HEINE HOUSE. Capt. GRANTHAM, O.C. 6th Company, was in command of all 5 Batteries with H.Q. at TYNE COTTAGE. He was in touch with the G.O.C.s 5th and 6th C.I.Bs. through M.G. Liaison Officers at respective Brigade H.Q.

First Division.

Battery	No. of Guns	Composition
No. 6	8	8 Guns, Yukon M.M.G. Battery
No. 7	8	8 Guns, 2nd C.M.G. Company
No. 8	8	(4 Guns, 3rd C.M.G. Company 4 Guns, 13th C.M.G. Company
No. 9	8	8 Guns, 3rd C.M.G. Company
No. 10	8	8 Guns, 13th C.M.G. Company

Batteries 6 and 7 were located immediately S. of WOLF COPSE; Nos. 8, 9, & 10 were on the vicinity of YETTA HOUSES. Major LALOR, O.C. 1st Company, was appointed Group Commander at 1st C.I.B. H.Q., CAPITOL. Major STEWART, O.C. 2nd Company, was Sub-Group Commander with H.Q. at KOREK.

The following Table shows the Tasks assigned to Machine Guns of the Canadian Machine Gun Corps for Phases VIII and IX:-

⁴⁵ Cdn. Corps. G 338/2520-3, dated Nov. 4th, 1917.

⁴⁶ Cdn. Corps G. 338/2525-3, dated Nov. 4th, 1917.

Tasks of Machine Guns – PASSCHENDAELE.

Phase VIII, November 6th, and Phase IX, November 10th, 1917.

	UNIT	Phase VIII				Phase IX			
		Barrage	Mobile	Sniping	Reserve	Barrage	Mobile	Sniping	Reserve
1st C.M.M.G. Bde.	'A' Battery				8				8
	'B' Battery				8	4 ⁴⁷			4
	Borden Battery	8 ⁴⁷				8 ⁴⁸			
	Eaton Battery				6	4 ⁴⁷			2
	Yukon Battery	8 ⁴⁸				8 ⁴⁸			
1st Div'l M.G. Bn.	1st C.M.G. Company		8		8		6 ⁴⁹		10
	2nd C.M.G. Company	8		4	4		4		12
	3rd C.M.G. Company	12			4	12			4
	13th C.M.G. Company	12			4	12			4
2nd Div'l M.G. Bn.	4th C.M.G. Company	12			4	8	4 ⁴⁹		4
	5th C.M.G. Company	4	8 ⁵⁰		4	4	4 ⁵²		8
	6th C.M.G. Company	4	8 ⁵¹		4	4	4 ⁵³		8
	14th C.M.G. Company	12			4	8	4 ⁴⁹		4
	TOTAL	80	24	4	58	72	26		68

Total Available Machine Guns, C.M.G. Corps:- 166

PHASE VIII; NOVEMBER 6TH, 1917.

Progress of Attack.

Zero Hour was 6.00 A.M. The weather was dull with occasional heavy showers throughout the day. The Attack progressed well along the whole Corps Front to the Final Objective, or GREEN LINE. By 7.10 A.M., Second Divisional Men were in PASSCHENDAELE Village in large numbers. At 8.45 A.M., all Objectives had been reached by the Second Division and Consolidation was being carried out. Stiff Fighting took place at some of the Pill Boxes in the N. end of PASSCHENDAELE. The First Division reached their Final Objective, at 7.45 A.M. The Garrison of MOSSELMARKT was surprised and surrendered with little Opposition. Hostile Troops holding organized and well camouflaged Shell-holes, supporting MOSSELMARKT, offered a stiff Resistance: 4 Machine Guns were captured here and put into Action against the Germans. 3 Platoons of the 3rd C.I. Bn. had $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour's stubborn Fighting at VINE COTTAGES before the Garrison surrendered. 5 Machine Guns and 40 Prisoners were taken here.

“Very material assistance was given throughout the day by the Artillery and Machine Guns of the Corps on the Right and Left. M.G.'s of the Corps on our Right were effective in keeping down enemy fire, previously troublesome,⁵⁴ from KEIBERG SPUR.”⁵⁵

Counter-attacks.

At 8.50 A.M., the enemy attempted a Counter-attack with 1 Battalion N. of PESSCHENDAELE against the Second Division. This Attack was beaten off, and no further Counter-attacks took place on the Corps Front. At 9.50, 10.30 and 11.45 A.M., enemy Troops, in process of assembling, were dispersed by

⁴⁷ Under Second Division.

⁴⁸ Under First Division.

⁴⁹ In Local Defence Positions occupied prior to Zero.

⁵⁰ 4 in Local Defence Positions occupied prior to Zero: 2 in Reserve in the Line.

⁵¹ 3 in Reserve in the Line.

⁵² 2 in Local Defence Positions occupied prior to Zero; 2 in Reserve in the Line.

⁵³ 2 in Local Defence Positions occupied prior to Zero; 2 on Anti aircraft.

⁵⁴ See Page 79.

⁵⁵ Canadian Corps Summary of Intelligence, Nov. 6th, 1917.

Canadian Corps and II Corps Artillery. The enemy shelled the captured ground very heavily throughout the day.

Mobile Guns Situation at 12.00 Noon.

Mobile Machine Guns moved after Zero Hour, to the Positions previously decided upon. At 12.00 Noon, November 6th, the Situation of Mobile Guns, as reported to the Corps Machine Gun Officer, was as follows:

“2nd CANADIAN DIVISION (Reported by Major PEARCE, O.C. Group, and 4th Cdn. Inf. Bde. H.Q. Telephoned by 2nd Cdn. Division to C.M.G.O.): 27th Cdn. Inf. Bn. reports that Machine Guns supporting them are in position and digging in. Liaison established. No news of other Mobile Guns, but reports are expected at any moment.”

“1st CANADIAN DIVISION (Reported by Lieut. HENRY, M.G. Liaison Officer through Major STEWART “KOREK,” and 1st Cdn. Inf. Bde. H.Q. Telephoned by 1st Cdn. Division to C.M.G.C.): All Machine Guns have reached localities assigned to them. One Machine Gun knocked out has already been replaced. Casualties light up to 12.00 Noon. Lieut. O’CONNOR, 1st C.M.G. Company, sent to inspect Mobile Machine Guns position for confirmation of situation not yet returned.”⁵⁶

Second Division Mobile Guns.

The 3 Crews, under Lieut. GIBSON, 5th Company, on the Right of the Second Division, went forward at Zero Hour with the First Wave of the 26th C.I.Bn. 2 Guns were placed in Position immediately E. of PASSCHENDAELE Church in the centre of the Village; the 3rd Gun was sited 300 yds. to the Right commanding the South-eastern Slope of the Ridge to the Railway and the ground beyond. These Guns reached their Positions with few Casualties. Lieut. GIBSON was wounded shortly after reaching the Final Objective and Sgt. CHAMBERLAND took command of the Guns. This N.C.O. remained in command until his Guns were relieved on the evening of November 8th. The 2 Guns of the 6th Company, under Lieut. TUCKER, were in Position in good time and maintained Liaison with the 27th C.I.Bn.

Experience of 2 Guns, 6th C.M.G. Company.

The 2 6th Company Mobile Guns, under Lieut. PEARCE, advanced with the First Wave of the 28th C.I.Bn. and reached their allotted location by 8.00 A.M. They were sited on high ground about 500 yds. N.-E. of GRAF WOOD, close to the inter-divisional Boundary and placed so as to command a Field of Fire of 1000 yds. to their Front and Left Flank. Lieut. PEARCE’s Report gives a vivid account of the conditions under which Machine Gun work was carried on, and of the difficulties met with in these Operations:

“We left the Transport Lines, POTIJZE, at 2.30 P.M., on the 5th Nov., with Nos. 5 & 6 crews No. 2 Section, 6th Cdn. M.G. Coy., to take up positions of 8 and 9 Guns shown on Secret Map M.G. B 5, after the objective had been gained. The guns, tripods, etc., were sent as far as SEINE CORNER (South) by pack animals under the command of Corporal MORRISON. The crews went by the way of the YPRES-ZONNEBEKE Road to a point where “H” Track came to within 50 yds. of this Road, thence by “H” Track to MANX CORNER, thence to SEINE CORNER to pick up guns, tripods, spare parts, oil and rations. Here we found that, owing to the foresight of Sgt. EUSTACE, members of his Barrage gun crews had been detailed to help the Transport unload and 2 piles were made, one of Lieut. TUCKER’S guns etc., and one of my own.”

“We were told here that the Transport had encountered shell fire on the road and suffered Casualties to the extent of 2 men killed and 7 wounded together with 5 pack animals killed. All guns, tripods and spare parts were got through; 4 filled belts and boxes, and rations for 24 hours were lost. These crews were thus short 4 filled belts and boxes and 24 hours rations. I reported to Major PEARCE (W.M.), O.C. mobile guns, at his H.Q., and through his kindness and that of Capt. GRANTHAM received 6 time corned beef and biscuits.”

“We left SEINE CORNER at 10.45 P.M. to take up a position in rear of the 28th Battalion at the jumping off trench near CREST FARM. I reported to a Company Commander of the 28th

⁵⁶ C.M.G.O.’s “Report on PASSCHENDAELE Operations.”

Battalion that we would start over with their first wave. The time of reporting to the 28th was 12.30 A.M. Shelling was encountered on "H" and "K" tracks at SEINE CORNER and on the way to CREST FARM, which was got through without casualties."

"Dug funk holes and rested there without casualties until 6.00 A.M. when we went over with 2 crews about 25 yds. apart, Sgt. BIERD taking command of No. 9 gun crew and Cpl. OWENS of No. 8 crew. We were able to get into position at approximately D.6.a.50.49 and D.6.a.55.39 at 8.00 A.M. The guns were mounted and remainder of crews put into shell holes. From the position of the guns the field of fire extended to 1000 yds. These guns were dismounted as soon as it was seen that the Infantry had reached the objective and consolidated. Guns were mounted at dusk and dismounted at daybreak. The funk holes that the men rested in were holes for 2 or 3 men dug out of the bottom of shell holes and just behind a fold in the ground where they seemed to be comparatively safe from shells. Although they burst extremely close only one man was buried and he easily got out, and one wounded, when they had finally dug themselves in."

A message was sent back as soon as the enemy barrage on CREST FARM and vicinity was seen to let up. This message never got through and at 3.40 P.M. another messenger was sent who never returned, but from information received he delivered his message. We underwent a very heavy enemy Artillery bombardment and by dusk on 6th Nov. only 2 gunners and 1 carrier were left on No. 8 gun. At 6.00 A.M. 7th Nov., only 1 gunner and 1 carrier were left on No. 8 gun L/Cpl. J.M. DONALD, No. 1 on the gun and the only gunner left, showed extreme coolness and cheerfulness. Though himself wounded in the leg when jumping off and again in the face and shoulder on the morning of 7th Nov., he would not leave his post. He carried on until both crews were relieved at 6.00 P.M. 8th Nov."⁵⁷

First Division Mobile Guns.

While waiting for Zero Hour in the Jumping-off Trench 1 of Lieut. TREBILCOCK's Guns (1st Company) was destroyed by Shell Fire and the Crew almost wiped out. 3 Other Ranks were killed and 1, wounded. This Gun was quickly replaced. Lieut. TREBILCOCK led his Crews forward $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour after Zero. At Noon, all 6 Guns were reported in Positions arranged for prior to the Operation; these Positions were on the highest ground of the BELLEVUE-MEETCHEELE Ridge, on either side of the WIELTJE Road between MEETCHEELE and MOSSELMARKT. At 10.05 A.M., Lieut. TREBILCOCK was seriously wounded and taken to the Dressing Station; he died of wounds in the afternoon. Lieut. MARTIN took command of the 6 Mobile Guns the same evening. Lieut. VINING's 2 Guns (1st Company) got up to their Positions at VANITY HOUSE without Casualties. Here they remained until relieved by the 1st Machine Gun Company (British) on the following night.

Sniping Guns.

The 4 Sniping Guns of the 2nd Company, under Lieut. McPHERSON, remained on CREST FARM from November 4th to 7th. During the Attack on the 6th, they were laid on MEETCHEELE SPUR. Each evening at dusk the Guns were mounted and laid on an S.O.S. Line. Throughout the Tour the Crews were subjected to Enemy Sniping, Shelling and considerable Machine Gun Fire from Aeroplanes. In spite of the intense Shelling on the 6th, these Guns had no Casualties. They were withdrawn on the evening of the 7th. When the Crews were preparing to leave, a number of large Shells fell in the Trench occupied by one of the Crews, burying Men, Guns and Equipment. 4 Other Ranks were killed, one O.R. was dug out, badly wounded, and 2, could not be found.

Second Division Barrage Batteries.

All Barrage Batteries carried out the Programme of Firing laid down. Nos. 1 and 2 Batteries in the vicinity of AUGUSTUS WOOD, came in for a lot of Shelling. No. 1 Battery (14th Company) was forced to move and returned to their original Emplacements at SEINE CORNER. No. 2 Battery (6th and 14th Company), although very heavily shelled after 8.00 A.M., remained in Position. 1 Gun was destroyed and 5 Other Ranks wounded. Batteries 3, 4 and 5 near HEINE HOUSE were shelled throughout the day, but had comparatively few Casualties. A Carrying Party for No. 3 Battery (4th Company) met with disaster while bringing up S.A.A. to the Positions. Out of 12 Other Ranks, 6 were killed and 4 wounded when the Party were overtaken by enemy Artillery Fire. The S.O.S. Signal was responded to at 10.00

⁵⁷ Report of Lieut. H.J.L. PEARCE, 6th C.M.G. Company, November 5th-8th, 1917.

A.M. and 6.45 P.M. No. 5 Battery alone (Borden M.M.G. Battery) fired 35,000 Rounds in reply to the S.O.S. at 10.00 A.M..

First Division Barrage Batteries.

Batteries 6 and 7, under the control of Capt. MEURLING M.C., O.C. Yukon M.M.G. Battery, were heavily shelled. Suffering 23 Casualties. These 2 Batteries expended 44,000 Rounds S.A.A. during the Attack Barrage. No. 8 Battery (3rd and 13th Companies) had 1 Gun destroyed early in the day, but, within 30 minutes, this Gun was replaced from the Advanced Armourer's Depot. A 2nd Gun destroyed in the evening, was similarly replaced. All Batteries fired in response to our S.O.S. Signal at 10.00 A.M. and again at 6.45 P.M.

Effectiveness of our M.G. Barrage.

The effectiveness of the work done by Barrage Machine Guns was quite generally spoken of by Infantry Officers. The G.O.C. 5th C.I.B., in his report on these Operations writes:-

“Our Machine Gun Barrage was perfect and, according to reports from prisoners, caused the enemy heavy casualties. When the S.O.S. Signal went up, our Machine Guns opened up so promptly that they were all firing before the flare reached the ground. This was very favourably commented on, on all hands, by the Infantry. The Machine Guns of the Australian Corps kept down fire from the KEIBERG SPUR.”

Prisoners captured on November 6th stated that Men of Second Line Battalion, coming up in Support of the German Front Line Troops, between 6.45 and 7.00 A.M. were literally mown down by our Machine Gun Barrage. Our Barrage also had the effect of keeping enemy Machine Gunners from operating their Guns. Many of these were sited in Shell-holes and in many cases Crews were forced by our Artillery and Machine Gun Fire to remain under cover. Captured German Machine gunners belonging to the 3rd M.G. Kompanie, 10th Gren. Regt., said that, owing to our M.G. and Artillery Fire and the rapidity of our Infantry Advance, not one of their 10 Machine Guns got into Action.

INTERVAL BETWEEN PHASE VIII AND PHASE IX.

Infantry Reliefs and Withdrawals.

On the night November 6th/7th, following Phase VIII, the 5th C.I.B. extended its Front, taking over the remainder of the Second Divisional Line from the 6th C.I.B. Two days later on the night 8th/9th the 5th C.I.B. was relieved by the 4th C.I.B. On the night 7th/8th, the 3rd C.I.B. relieved the 1st C.I.B., and on the following night the 2nd C.I.B. took over the First Divisional Line from the 3rd C.I.B. The Corps Frontage was shortened considerably on the night 7th/8th, when the First Division (British) took over a large portion of the Left Divisional Sector including VALOUR FARM, VEGETABLE FARM, VANITY HOUSE and VINE COTTAGE.

M.G. Reliefs and Withdrawals.

Machine Gun Reliefs were carried out in both Sectors. The 2nd Company Sniping Guns on CREST FARM were withdrawn on the evening of November 7th. The same night, Lieut. VINING's 2 Guns (1st Company) at VANITY HOUSE were relieved by 2 Guns of the 1st M.G. Company (British). On the 8th, the Mobile or Local Defence Guns of the 2nd Canadian Divisional M.G. "Battalion" were relieved by arrangements of Company Commanders concerned in accordance with the D.M.G.C.'s Orders.

Owing to the heavy losses suffered by Barrage Batteries in the intervals between previous Phases and because of the great strain upon the Personnel who had to remain in the Line in some of the Cases as long as 8 days without Relief, the Corps Commander, acting on the recommendations of Lt.-Col. BRUTINEL, gave Orders that Barrage Batteries be withdrawn 48 hours after an Operation, leaving only sufficient Guns in Position for Harassing Fire and dealing with S.O.S. signals.⁵⁸ In accordance with this order Barrage Batteries were readjusted on November 8th. The Borden and Yukon M.M.G. Batteries (Nos. 5 and 6) were withdrawn, and Machine Gun Company Barrage Guns rearranged, leaving in the Line 4 Guns per Company, or 16 Guns on each Divisional Front, for Harassing Fire and S.O.S. calls. Each of these Guns had instructions to fire 2000 Rounds each night. Fire concentrations were arranged for by Group

⁵⁸ Cdn. Corps O.O. 163, Para 7, dated October 31st, 1917.

Commanders. Guns were dismounted 1 hour after dawn and Crews and Guns were kept under cover during the day in Pill Boxes or improvised Shelters.

Major BASEVI, O.C., 14th Company, relieved Major PEARE as Mobile Gun Commander at TYNE COTTAGE on November 8th. On the same day, Capt. MORRIS, O.C., 3rd Company, relieved Major LALOR as Group Commander at CAPITOL, and Capt. DENHOLM, 13th Company, relieved Major STEWART, O.C., 2nd Company as Sub-Group Commander at KOREK.

Operations Nov. 7th to Nov. 9th.

November 7th, 8th and 9th, the 3 days intervening between Phases VIII and IX, were exceptionally quiet. No Operations were undertaken against our new Positions by the Germans. On the 8th and 9th, our Patrols were active, endeavouring to establish the location of the enemy Line. Our Machine Guns carried out Harassing Fire each night.

Objectives and Order of Battle for Phase IX.

The Operation comprising Phase IX of the Battle of PASSCHENDAELE was fought on November 10th by the First and Second Cdn. Divisions. The First Division (British), II Corps, attacked on the Left and the II ANZAC Corps gave supporting Fire on the Right of the Canadian Corps. The direction of the Advance was along the PASSCHENDAELE Ridge. Owing to the First Division's (British) taking over a portion of our Line on the Left, the Frontage of Attack was considerably shorter than in the other 3 Phases. Corps and Inter-Divisional Boundaries and Jumping-off Line are shown on Canadian Corps PASSCHENDAELE Operations Map (Opposite p. 129) Attacking Brigades and Battalions from Right to Left were:-

4th C.I.B.		20th C.I.Bn.
2nd C.I.B.	(Right	7th C.I.Bn.
	(Left	8th C.I.Bn.

Second Division Local Defence Guns.

No Sniping Machine Guns were used for Phase IX. On the Second Divisional Front no Mobile Guns were sent forward with the Infantry. As the Attack was of such shallow Depth on this Sector it was not thought desirable to send Machine Guns forward. Their Tasks of aiding in Consolidation and Defence of the Line could be done equally well from Positions in which the Guns were already sited prior to Zero. All Guns other than those firing Barrage were termed Local Defence Guns, in the 2nd Canadian Divisional M.G. "Battalion" Operation Order for this Attack.

These Guns were designated, composed and situated as follows, prior to Zero Hour, November 10th:-

No.	UNIT	Location
1	5th Company) 150 yds. N.-W. of TIBER.
2	5th Company)
3	14th Company	250 yds. S. of PASSCHENDAELE Church.
4	14th Company	300 yds. N. of PASSCHENDAELE Church.
5	14th Company) In Northern outskirts of PASSCHENDAELE,
6	4th Company) 500 yds. N. of Church.
7	4th Company)
8	4th Company) 400 yds. in Rear of 6 and 7.
9	4th Company)
10	6th Company	At GRUN.
11	14th Company	400 yds. S. of PASSCHENDAELE Church.
12	6th Company	On CREST FARM.
13	6th Company	Mounted for Anti-Aircraft Firing.
14	6th Company)
15	5th Company) In Reserve in the Line
16	5th Company)

A Line of Machine Gun Defences was provided by these Guns an average distance of 200 yds. from the new Front Line. Guns 1, 2, 3, 10, 11 and 12 protected the Eastern Slope of the PASSCHENDAELE Ridge; Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 were sited for the Defence of PASSCHENDAELE itself and that part of the RIDGE immediately N. of the Village. On the Second Divisional Front, therefore, 12 Guns were in Local Defence Positions for the Operation, 2 on Anti-Aircraft duty and 2 held in Reserve. Major

BASEVI (O.C., 14th Company) was in command of all Local Defence Guns and responsible for co-ordinating their work. His H.Q. were at TYNE COTTAGE.

The following Officers were in command of Local Defence Guns:-

Gun Number	Officer in Command.
1, 2 and 10	Lieut. MacLAREN (5th Company)
3, 4 and 5	Lieut. BADGLEY (14th Company)
6 and 7	Lieut. DUFF (4th Company)
8 and 9	Lieut. MAHAFFY (4th Company)
11 and 12	Lieut. SALISBURY (14th Company)

First Division Local Defence and Mobile Guns.

In the First Division, 6 Guns were assigned to Local Defence, 4 were sent forward as Mobile Guns. The Local Defence Guns, all belonging to the 1st Company, were in Position on the N.-E. and N. Slope of the BELLEVUE-MEETCHEELE SPUR. They were sited on either side of the WIELTJE Road, from a point 250 yds. S. of MOSSELMARKT to MEETCHEELE. These Guns were commanded by Lieut. MARTIN (1st Company), who had relieved Lieut. TREBILCOCK when he was fatally wounded on November 6th.

The 4 Mobile Guns, provided by the 2nd Company, were under the command of Lieut. LAING, and came "for all purposes under orders of the G.O.C., 2nd Inf. Bde."⁵⁹ The general Task assigned these Guns is set forth in the following Order of the G.O.C., 2nd C.I.B.:-

"One Section of four Vickers Guns has been allotted to this Brigade as Mobile Guns to be used in Defensive positions for Flank and Frontal Fire. Lieut. J.G. LAING, the Officer in charge of these guns, will report to the O's.C. 7th and 8th Canadian Infantry Battalions. Battalions will issue orders to him for the disposition of his guns, this disposition to be a defensive position in the vicinity of MOSSELMARKT, from or in rear of the present front line where they will have as much protection as possible. When the situation permits and there is an opportunity to have them placed to the best advantage for Flank and Frontal observed fire down the Eastern Slope of the Ridge, they will be moved forward."

All the above orders to be given by the Battalion Commanders. Battalions will include these guns in their orders. They will be in touch with them at all times, and look after them in every way as though they were part of their own unit. On the relief of the line by the 5th and 10th Battalions, these guns will be turned over to the Commanders of the 5th and 10th Battalions, who will administer these guns as laid down."

These Guns joined the Infantry Battalions in the Jumping-off Trench at 12.30 A.M., November 6th, 2 Guns each with the 7th and 8th C.I.Bns.

Barrage Guns: Resources.

The Machine Gun Resources employed for the Massed Action in Phase IX were as follows:

2nd Cdn. Divisional M.G. "Battalion"	24 Guns
1st Cdn. Divisional M.G. "Battalion"	24 Guns
1st Cdn. M.G. Brigade.	24 Guns
TOTAL	72 Guns
Right Flank, I ANZAC Corps	16 Guns
Grand TOTAL	88 Guns

This number provided a Final Barrage on the approximate basis of 1 Machine Gun for every 30 yds. of Front, as in the other Phases. The I ANZAC Corps gave flanking assistance. They prolonged the Cdn. Corps M.G. Barrage with a Battery of 8 Guns, and neutralized enemy observation from EDDY HEIGHTS with a second Machine Gun Battery of 8 Guns. The Machine Gun Barrage of the II Corps on the Left was Co-ordinated with the Canadian Corps M.G. Barrage. Of the 72 C.M.G. Corps Barrage Machine Guns, 32 Guns supported the Second Division, and 40, the First Division, organized, as usual, into 8-Gun Batteries.

⁵⁹ First Cdn. Divl. M.G. "Bn.", Par.5, O.O. No. 15, dated Nov. 9th, 1917.

Second Division Barrage Batteries.

The Batteries on the Second Division Front were designated and composed as follows:-

Battery	Unit
No. 1	8 Guns, 14th C.M.G. Company
No. 2	4 Guns, 5th C.M.G. Company 4 Guns, 6th C.M.G. Company
No. 3	8 Guns, 4th C.M.G. Company
No. 4	4 Guns, 'B' Battery, 1st C.M.M.G. Bde. 4 Guns, Eaton Battery, 1st C.M.M.G. Bde.

Batteries were situated in Rear of HAALEN COPSE and DECK Wood. Positions were occupied night November 9th/10th. Capt. GRANTHAM, O.C., 6th Company, remained in command of the Group with his H.Q. at TYNE COTTAGE.

First Division Barrage Batteries.

The First Division Barrage Batteries were designated and composed as follows:-

Battery	Unit
No. 5	8 Guns, 13th C.M.G. Company
No. 6	8 Guns, 3rd C.M.G. Company
No. 7	4 Guns, 3rd C.M.G. Company 4 Guns, 13th C.M.G. Company
No. 8	8 Guns, Borden M.M.G. Battery
No. 9	8 Guns, Yukon M.M.G. Battery

Batteries 5, 6 and 7 were in Position in the vicinity of SNIPE HALL. Nos. 8 and 9 were located 150 yds. to the Left of BELLEVUE Pill Box. Positions were occupied night November 9th-10th. Major STEWART, O.C., 2nd Company, was appointed Group Commander with H.Q. at 2nd C.I.B. Hdqrs., CAPITOL. Capt. MORRIS, O.C., 3rd Company, was at KOREK, as Liaison Officer with the Batteries for Major STEWART.

PHASE IX, NOVEMBER 10TH, 1917.

The Attack.

The Attack began at 6.05 A.M. November 10th. Rain had fallen during the night and the weather was wet during the greater part of the day. Our Troops made rapid progress. By 8.00 A.M. all Objectives were reported taken. The Second Division encountered none of the enemy and quickly established themselves on the Final Objective. In the Left Sector, the 7th C.I.Bn., being greatly worried by Rifle and Machine Gun Fire from VENISON TRENCH, about 300 yds. beyond the Final Objective, went forward and captured a portion of the Trench, with Prisoners. Later this Battalion fell back to conform with the general Situation. After reaching the original Objective, shortly after 6.50 A.M., the 8th C.I.Bn. found their Left Flank exposed; Troops of the First Division (British) were held up by heavy enemy M.G. Fire from VOCATION and VOX Farms. As these Troops were unable to get forward, the 8th C.I.Bn. had to refuse its Left Flank and formed a Defensive Flank, facing W., bending the Line back from the Final Objective to a point 100 yds. E. of VENTURE FARM. From 9.00 A.M. until late in the afternoon the new Line was subjected to the most intense hostile Shelling our Men had ever experienced. At 2.36 P.M., an enemy Counter-attack was driven off with heavy loss to the Germans.

Second Division Local Defence Guns.

Local Defence Machine Guns had little firing throughout the day as very few Targets presented themselves. Positions were subjected to a large amount of Shelling. 3 Guns of the 14th Company Nos. 3, 4, and 5, were kept out of Action by enemy Shelling during the whole Operation. The Guns with all Equipment were destroyed at these Positions, (300 yds. N. of PASSCHENDAELE Church), on the 9th

inst. 7 Other Ranks were killed, and the Officer in charge, Lieut. BADGELY, with 2 Other Ranks, wounded. Lieut. BADGLEY remained on duty until the 10th, when he reported to Hospital.

Other 3 Guns with fresh Crews were got together by Major BASEVI, O.C. Local Defence Guns, and Group H.Q. When they were ready to start for their Positions at 2.00 A.M., November 10th, enemy Artillery suddenly shelled TYNE COTTAGE, again destroying Guns and Equipment and killing 2 Other Ranks. Major BASEVI, wired the D.M.G.C., Major GOODFELLOW, for fresh Guns and Equipment and had the remainder of the Crews go under cover to await Orders. The Guns arrived from the D.M.G.C. about 4.30 P.M., but on account of the severity of enemy Shelling, it was decided to hold the Guns until daylight next morning, when Sgt. BALL (6th Company), with 2 Guns and crews started, at 6.00 A.M., for the Positions. At Noon, both Guns with their Ammunition were blown up and destroyed by enemy Shell Fire and Sgt. BALL reported back at TYNE COTTAGE at 1.30 P.M. with the Crews. The attempt to place Guns in these Positions was then definitely abandoned.

Lieut. MACLAREN (5th Company) at Positions 1 and 2 had an unfortunate Tour. 2 Guns were destroyed on the way into the Line on November 8th. These were replaced. On November 9th, 4 Other Ranks were killed and 2 wounded at these Positions during severe Shelling.

All the Local Defence Guns remained in positions occupied before Zero Hour, with the exception of Gun 8 and 9 under Lieut. MAHAFFY (4th Company). In the course of the morning of the 10th, this Officer moved his Guns up to the Left of, and in Line with the other 2 Forward Guns of the 4th Company, Nos. 6 & 7 (under Lieut. DUFF). In the new Positions Guns 8 & 9 were placed immediately W. of the PASSCHENDAELE-WESTROOSEBEKE Road, lose to the Inter-Divisional Boundary.

First Division Local Defence and Mobile Guns.

The Local Defence Guns of the First Division, under Lieut. MARTIN, came in for a lot of Shelling, but had comparatively few Casualties. The 4 Mobile Guns under Lieut. LAING got forward with the Infantry into previously selected Positions, and had numerous Targets, but by the evening all but one had been destroyed or put out of Action by enemy Shell Fire.

“The Section (4 Guns) moved off from ‘X’ Camp at 12.30 P.M., November 9th. Lieut. LAING had gone ahead and the following disposition had been arranged in conference with the Battalion Commanders: Nos. 2 and 3 guns under Lieut. LAING to one Battalion, and Nos. 1 and 4 guns under Sgt. COATES to the other Battalion. The Guns moved up to the jumping off trench and dug in about 12.30 A.M. on the 10th. On the way up to the jumping off trench No 2 gun had 3 Casualties, arriving in position with only one man and a corporal.”

“At Zero Hour the four guns went forward with the Second wave and dug in about 200 yds. behind the final objective. When the guns were all in position Lieut. LAING left the crew he had gone forward with to visit the other guns and to report his dispositions to Battalion Headquarters. This is the last definite information regarding this Officer who has since been reported ‘Missing and believed killed.’”⁶⁰

Brave Conduct of Crews.

“This then left the N.C.O. and one man alone with No. 2 Gun. At about 3.30 P.M., this man was sent out sick and the N.C.O., L/Cpl. FROST, was the only man left with the gun. This soldier worked his gun, sniping at enemy parties, until his ammunition ran out. He dismounted his gun and put it under cover in a shell hole, and went back and brought up more ammunition. With this new supply he kept his gun in action until the Battalion was relieved, when he carried out his gun safely to ‘X’ Camp and reported. During this period he was without food or water, and stayed with his gun under the worst discomforts possible.”

No. 1 gun arrived at its objective without casualties. Shortly after getting into position one man was wounded and was being assisted out when the gun was put out of action. The remaining men of this crew eventually made their way to ‘X’ Camp. No. 4 gun got up into position. All the crew except one man and Sgt. COATES became Casualties on the way up. They kept this gun in Action until 3.20 P.M. when it was also knocked out of action. Sgt. COATES and the remaining man were badly shaken up, but managed to get back to the rear. No. 3 gun got into position, and when last seen was being operated by

⁶⁰ This Officer has sine been reported “Killed in Action” on Nov. 10th, 1917.

the only survivor of the crew, L/Cpl. SHARPLES. This man also became a casualty later, so nothing definite about his gun is available.”⁶¹

Mobile Gun Reinforcements.

Owing to Lieut. LAING's disappearance before the disposition of his Guns was known to the Infantry Commanders, and on account of the subsequent disorganization caused by enemy Shelling, no official work of these Mobile Guns was received through the regular channels. Major WATSON, D.M.G.C., First Division, hearing indirectly, that the Mobile Guns had suffered heavily in getting forward, had 4 Crews with Guns and 48 hours Rations proceed to the Line as Reinforcements, leaving “X” Camp at 10.20 P.M. that night.

For the reasons just given, no information as to the whereabouts of the Mobile Guns could be obtained in the Line. The Sergeant in charge of the Reinforcements reported to the O.C., 10th C.I.Bn. and went on to the “Report Centre.” No one had seen Lieut. LAING nor knew the location of the Forward Guns. There was no shelter for the reinforcing Crews where they were and no definite job for them to do. After a consultation with Lieut. MARTIN (O.C. Local Defence Guns) and later with Major STEWART at 2nd C.I.B. Hdqrs., it was decided to send the Men and Guns back to the Transport Lines, where they arrived at 10.00 A.M., November 11th.

Mobile Guns Supplied from Barrage Battery.

At 6.00 P.M., on the 10th, the Bde. Major 2nd C.I.B. had told Major WATSON (D.M.G.C.) over the Telephone, that 4 more Mobile Guns were required at once by the G.O.C. As the Reinforcements were not yet on the way from “X” Camp, Major WATSON's only alternative was to draw 4 Guns from the Barrage Batteries. Major STEWART M.G. Liaison Officer at 2nd C.I.B. Hdqrs., CAPITOL, then received instructions from the G.O.C. Brigade for these Guns to proceed to the 5th C.I.Bn. Hdqrs., which they did. On arrival there, Lieut. LUNHAM, the Officer in charge, could get no Instructions, and the Guns and Crews were replaced again in their Barrage Positions.

Through lack of information regarding the Dispositions and fate of the 4 Mobile Guns which attacked with Battalions on the morning of the 10th, it turned out that no Vickers Guns were in close support of the Infantry on the First Divisional Front during the night following the Attack. (Lieut. MARTIN's Local Defence Guns were 500 to 800 yds. in Rear of the Front Line). This Situation was rectified as soon as it was fully understood, and 4 Forward Guns were placed in Position on the 11th, 2, at VINDICTIVE CROSS ROADS, firing N.-E. and 2, N. of VENTURE FARM, to assist in defending the exposed Left Flank.

Barrage Guns.

Barrage Guns carried out the Programme of Fire laid down for the Operation. The S.O.S. was responded to when the Germans counter-attacked at 2.36 P.M. The intensity of the enemy Shelling, the activity of enemy low-flying Aeroplanes, and, perhaps, more than anything else, the wet weather made Barrage work unusually difficult on November 10th. At most Barrage Positions it was impossible to dig serviceable Trenches because of the ground. Where these were dug, the rain and Shelling combined to loosen the soil and caused the Trenches to fall in.

Difficulties in Keeping Barrage Guns in Action.

The conditions made it difficult to keep Belts clean and dry. 6 Guns of No. 5 Battery (13th Company) answered the S.O.S. signal in the afternoon of the 10th. After firing 3 Belts, 4 of these Guns went out of Action on account of wet and dirty Belts, caused by the rain and by mud thrown up over Guns and Equipment by Shell Fire. After 20 minutes all Guns were out of Action from the same cause. This was a common experience among the Barrage Batteries on November 10th. The Men worked hard to keep their Guns and Equipment in good condition, all kinds of devices being tried, but the difficulties were found almost insurmountable. Fortunately the rain did not fall heavily until 10.00 A.M. so that it interfered very little with the Attack Barrage, when Batteries fired an average of 20,000 Rounds each. In his Report on the Phase the G.O.C., Second Cdn. Division writes:- "Our M.G. Barrage on Nov. 10th was very effective and satisfactory."

⁶¹ Report of O.C., 2nd C.M.G. Company, on Phase IX.

All Battery Positions were shelled, for German Artillery Fire was general over the whole Forward Area. 11 Barrage Machine Guns were destroyed by Shell Fire during the day.

Barrage Battery Shelled Out.

One hour after Zero, No. 1 Battery (14th Coy.) near HAALEN COPSE, after having 2 Guns blown up, moved to new Positions 200 yds. in Rear. Lieut. LYON was killed at the original Positions. The Action of this Battery is described as follows, by the O.C., 14th Company:-

"In accordance with orders received, the Barrage Guns of No. 1 Battery opened fire at Zero (6.05 A.M.) and continued firing for 55 minutes when enemy Shelling became so intense that Lieut. TWEDDELL, 14th C.M.G. Company, who was in charge of the Battery, withdrew the remainder of the Battery about 200 yards, after 1 gun and equipment had been destroyed by a direct hit and another gun put out of action by hostile shell fire. During this heavy shelling Lieut. D. LYON, 14th C.M.G. Company, 2nd in command of the Battery, was killed and 2 Other Ranks, wounded."

"Guns were then laid on the S.O.S. Line. Later on a message was received to lengthen range 300 yards as our Infantry had gone ahead that distance. Guns were laid accordingly. Whilst in these new positions, the guns were subjected to a very heavy shelling, causing 2 guns to be put out of action and wounding Lieut. TWEDDELL. Sgt. BRADFORD, 14th C.M.G. Company, who was then in charge of the Battery, repaired the 2 guns and got them into the action again. Sgt. BRADFORD remained in charge until the arrival of Lieut. WHITE, 14th C.M.G. Company."⁶²

Casualties.

In spite of the Shelling, Casualties were light by comparison. No. 4 Battery, under Capt. HARKNESS, M.C., O.C., Eaton M.M.G. Battery, had no Casualties during the Tour. The soft and muddy state of the ground was no doubt responsible for keeping down the number of Casualties. Shells went into the soil before exploding, so that flying fragments of metal were contained and retarded by the mud.

All Batteries were not equally fortunate in respect of Casualties. At No. 8 Battery (Borden M.M.G. battery) Lieut. KILL was killed 30 minutes after fire was opened. 2 Guns were put out of Action. At 1.30 P.M., 3 Other Ranks were killed and 3, wounded; 15 minutes later, Capt. NICHOLSON, O.C., Borden Battery, was wounded. At the adjoining Battery, No. 9 (Yukon M.M.G. Battery), 2 Guns were put out of Action in the course of the morning. At 11.15, Lieut. BLACK (a/O.C., Yukon M.M.G. Battery) and 5 Other Ranks were buried in their Section of Trench by the earth thrown back from a bursting Shell. All were so badly shaken that they had to proceed to a Dressing Station.

SUBSEQUENT EVENTS, NOVEMBER 11TH TO NOVEMBER 20TH, 1917.

General.

The successful Operation of November 10th brought the Battle of PASSCHENDAELE to a close; the Canadian Corps had accomplished the Task assigned to it in the General plan of operation for this Area; the whole of the PASSCHENDAELE RIDGE was in our hands. The Weather continued wet on the day following the Attack but cleared up on November 12th, and throughout the remainder of the Tour was generally fair.

During the days following Phase IX and until the Canadian corps was relieved by the VIII Corps on November 18th, our Troops were employed in the work of Consolidation, Construction of Defences and strengthening our Positions. The Line was thinned out to the greatest possible extent compatible with safety and as many Men as possible were kept under shelter. Orders were issued not to engage the enemy actively except in so far as it was necessary to do so in routine Patrol work. As a preparatory step to further Operations of the SECOND ARMY in this Area, the II Corps on our Left was ordered to carry out a Minor Operation for the capture of VIRILE, VOCATION, VIX and VIRTUE Farms. Our Left Division co-operated in this Operation.⁶³

⁶² 14th C.M.G. Company, War Diary for November, 1917.

⁶³ See Cdn. Corps Instructions for the Offensive, PASSCHENDAELE, No. 5, dated Nov. 12th, 1917.

Divisional Reliefs.

Meantime, the Divisions which had carried out Phases VIII and IX were relieved by the Divisions from the SECOND ARMY Rest Area, the Fourth Division relieving the Second, and the Third Division relieving the First. Relief of the Second by the Fourth Cdn. Division was completed at 10.00 A.M., November 13th. The G.O.C., Third Cdn. Division assumed command of the Left Sector from the G.O.C., First Cdn. Division, at 10.00 A.M., November 12th.

First and Second Divisions Move to VIMY Front.

Upon relief the First and Second Divisions returned to the VIMY Front under the First Army. Here the First Division relieved the Fifty-ninth Division (British) in the AVION and LENS Sector coming under Orders of the I Corps. Divisional H.Q. were established at the CHATEAU de la HAIE on November 17th. The Second Division completed the Relief of the Forty-eighth Division (British) on November 18th with H.Q. at the CHATEAU d'ACQ. The Second Division came under Orders of the XIII Corps.

Reliefs and Moves of Second M.G. "Bn."

The Second Canadian Divisional M.G. "Battalion" (Major GOODFELLOW, M.C.) was relieved by the Fourth Cdn. M.G. "Battalion" (Major M.A. SCOTT, D.S.O.) on the night November 11th/12th, and proceeded to the XIII Corps Area, arriving at Billets in MAISNIL-BOUCHE on the 15th. The journey of 55 miles (by Road) was made by Motor Lorries in 4 stages, by way of BRANDHOEK (12th), St. FLORIS (13th), LAUGNOY (14th) and on to MAISNIL-BOUCHE on the 15th. On the following day the 4th and 14th Companies followed them on November 18th.

The 4th and 14th Companies took over Machine Gun Positions in the Line, MERICOURT Sector, on the night of their arrival at AUX RIETZ, November 16th/17th. The 4th Company relieved the 143rd M.G. Company (British).⁶⁴ The 14th Company relieved the 144th Company (British).

Reliefs and Moves of First M.G. "Bn."

The First M.G. "Battalion" (Major WATSON, D.S.O.) was relieved by the Third "Battalion" (Major MOORHOUSE) in two stages; Barrage Batteries (3rd and 13th Companies) on November 11th; Forward Guns, on night November 12th/13th. The 3rd and 13th Companies moved as soon as relieved arriving in Billets in BOUVIGNY Huts⁶⁵ on November 14th. The journey was made in Lorries by way of MERVILLE (12th) and VENDIN-lez-BETHUNE, OBLINGHEM (13th). The 1st and 2nd Companies moved from Camp "X" to MERVILLE on November 14th, and came on to OBLINGHEM on the 15th. By the 19th, all 4 Companies were back in Machine Gun Camp, CARENCY, which they had left on October 13th.

The 3rd and 13th Companies, as was the case with the 4th and 14th Companies, had no rest. On the night November 16th/17th, the 13th Company relieved the 177th M.G. Company (British) in the LENS Sector. The 3rd Company carried out the Relief of the 174th M.G. Company (British) in the AVION Sector on the night 17th/18th. Both Companies went into the Line from BOUVIGNY HUTS. Their Transport proceeded to M.G. Camp, CARENCY, on the 17th.

Transport.

The Transport of both "Battalions" made the journey from the YPRES Area by Road, independently of the Companies.

Fourth and Third M.G. "Battalions" Second Tour at PASSCHENDAELE.

On night November 11th/12th, the Fourth M.G. "Battalion" (Major M.A. SCOTT, D.S.O.) relieved the Second Battalion (Major GOODFELLOW, M.C.), under orders of the D.M.G.C., as follows:- the 11th Company relieved all Local Defence Guns, 16 Barrage Gun Positions were taken over, 8 Guns by the 10th Company, 4 Guns by the 12th Company, and 4 by the 16th Company; the 4 16th Company Guns relieved Guns of the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade which withdrew to YORK CAMP. Lieut. A.G. SCOTT, M.C. (11th Company) relieved Major BASEVI, as O.C. Local Defence Guns, and Major L.F. PEARCE

⁶⁴ This Company had relieved the 4th Company in this Sector, night Oct. 15th/16th, 1917.

⁶⁵ On the LORETTE RIDGE immediately N. of BOUVIGNY WOOD.

(O.C. 12th Company) assumed command of the Barrage Group, relieving Capt. GRANTHAM. Inter-Company Reliefs were carried out on November 15th. The 10th and 16th Companies took over the Local Defence Positions from the 11th Company. Capt. LOGAN (16th Company) relieved Lieut. SCOTT in command of these Guns. Major PEARCE remained in charge of Barrage Guns.

As previously stated the Third M.G. "Battalion" (Major MOORHOUSE) relieved the First "Battalion" (Major WATSON, D.S.O.) in 2 stages: 24 Barrage Gun Positions were taken over on night of November 11th/12th, 16 Positions by the 15th Company, and 4 each, by the 7th and 8th Companies.

On the same night, 4 additional Forward Guns were placed in Position on the Left of the Divisional Sector by the 8th Company. First Division Forward Guns were relieved by the 8th Company of the night 12th/13th. Barrage Batteries 8 and 9, composed of the Borden and Yukon Batteries, had been withdrawn to YORK CAMP at 9.30 A.M. on the 11th. Capt. HARTLEY (O.C. 15th Company) was appointed O.C., Barrage Group, with H.Q. at CAPITOL; Lieut. BURNHAM was Liaison Officer at KOREK. Major PARKES (O.C., 8th Company) assumed command of Forward Guns. Inter-Company Reliefs were effected on November 15th. The 9th Company (Major McFAUL) relieved the 8th Company at all 14 Forward Gun Positions, Major WEIR (O.C., 7th Company) took place of Capt. HARTLEY, and Lieut. DRINKWATER relieved Major PARKES in command of Forward Guns.

Operations Nov. 11th to 18th.

In accordance with the Canadian Corps Policy during this Period, no active Operations were undertaken. Our Patrols were busy and captured a few Prisoners. Our Artillery fired in conjunction with the II Corps successful Minor Operation on November 16th. On this day, patrols were put out by the 42nd C.I.Bn, on the Left of the Corps Front, between VENTURE and VOCATION Farms, when the latter had been occupied by the First Division (British). Enemy Artillery harassed our forward and rear areas unceasingly with 5.9", 8" and Gas Shells. A Counter-attack against the Third Division, at 4.35 P.M., November 13th, was broken up with great loss to the enemy.

Activities of our Machine Guns were normal during these days. Local Defence Guns improved their Positions, got up Ammunition Supplies, but did little Firing. Barrage Guns answered S.O.S. Signals and carried out Harassing Fire each night. Forward S.A.A. Dumps were replenished and a plentiful supply of S.A.A. was provided at the Gun Positions - an average of 20,000 Rounds per Gun.

11th Company Local Defence Guns, Nov. 11th to 15th.

The experience of our Forward Machine Guns during this period are well illustrated by the following extracts from the 11th Company War Diary:-

"Nov. 11th.

"Transport moved (from CAESTRE) to our old lines in POTIJZE at 9.30 A.M., arriving at 11.30 A.M. The Sections moved by train to YPRES at 12.00 noon, from which place we marched to POTIJZE, arriving at 2 P.M.

"Lieut. JOHNSTON and Lieut. SCOTT went on ahead to TYNE COT to make arrangements to relieve 13 guns of the 4th, 5th, 6th and 14th C.M.G. Coys. in the forward area.

"At 4 P.M. the relieving party consisting of Lieuts. CONNOLLY, CARPENTER, and EATON with four crews of 'A' Sect., and three crews from each of 'B', 'C' and 'D' Sections moved into the Line. Lieut. SCOTT remained at TYNE COT to act as O.C. of 'A' Group consisting of our 13 guns located as shown on the attached map.

"The relief was completed by 10.45 P.M. About 8 P.M. Lieut. CONNOLLY and seven other ranks were gassed and had to be evacuated.

"Nov. 12th.

"On the morning of the 12th enemy aeroplanes flew over our lines at a height of about 75 feet firing at every possible target with machine gun fire. On the afternoon a direct hit was made on no. 7 position, burying the gun and destroying the ammunition. The gun and equipment were, however, afterwards recovered and quickly put into working order again.

"Intense shell fire was experienced at all positions, especially in the vicinity of the PASSCHENDAELE BREWERY, where two of our guns, Nos. 8 and 13, were located. Many direct hits were made on this building, one shell bursting in the cellar killing 6 men and wounding 6 others ... Lieut. KILLIP arrived as reinforcement.

"Nov. 13th.

"Lieut. KILLIP went into the line with two gun crews on the morning of the 13th, placing one gun in the immediate support line, which was then held by the 54th Battn., and formed the right flank of the Canadian Sector. The second gun was placed in an advanced position slightly to the left. In the afternoon No. 13 gun was blown up and the tripod of No. 8 gun destroyed. The crews of these guns then withdrew.

"About 5 P.M. our S.O.S. went up when the enemy immediately put a heavy Barrage on our lines. L/Col. EASTLAND was killed, and Ptes. YOUNG, JOHNSON and FRENCH wounded, a direct hit being made on their Position No. 12. Pte WALTON was also wounded by shrapnel.

"Nov. 14th.

"On the morning of the 14th, the position in the immediate support line under Lieut. KILLIP received a direct hit ... The shelling was intense all day. (1 O.R. was killed and 2 O.R. wounded)...

"Nov. 15th.

"The Company was relieved in the line by Sections of the 8th Machine Gun Coy. under Lieut. DOUGLAS; by Sections of the 10th Company under Lieut. THOMPSON; and by Sections of the 16th Company under Lieut. FRENCH. Heavy shelling was experienced on the way out, one man being killed and two others wounded."⁶⁶

7th Company Barrage Guns, Nov. 11th to 17th.

The following extracts from the 7th Company (Major WEIR) War Diary illustrate the daily routine of the Barrage Guns during this Tour. The 7th Company had 4 Guns in Barrage Positions November 11th to 15th and 12 Guns, November 15th to 17th.

"Nov. 11th.

" 'C' Section under Lieut. MOTHERSHILL relieved 4 Guns of the 13th Canadian Machine Gun Company. Belts were not taken over owing to a report that they were wet and almost unserviceable. 1 carrier wounded on the way in.

"The Positions are in shell-holes and very wet. It is almost impossible for the men to get any sleep, and at times they are heavily shelled. Relief complete by 11.30 A.M.

"Nov. 12th.

"Sand bags, rum and dry sox sent up to the 4 Gun Crews in the line.

"Nov. 13th.

"6 Gunners and 1 Carrier with Lieut. MOTHERSGILL wounded, and 6 reinforcements sent up. Lieut. MOTHERSGILL reports shelling severe and weather conditions very bad. The men were practically unable to get any sleep and are wet to their knees. We are continuing to send dry socks up daily ... and returning the wet ones to Division. Pack train of 16 animals called for this A.M. Lieut. SPALDING took charge of party. 64,000 rounds S.A.A. taken from WATERLOO DUMP to near the gun positions.

"No movement allowed at gun positions due to low-flying enemy planes which fire at our men and direct their artillery against any movement.

"Nov. 14th.

"Orders received to relieve some of the guns in the line. 16 pack animals again sent forward to take S.A.A. from WATERLOO to dumps on road near gun positions. Our guns last night answered S.O.S. call and it is reported that they caused heavy casualties to the enemy who attempted to counter attack."⁶⁷

"Nov. 15th.

⁶⁶ 11th C.M.G. Company War Diary for November, 1917.

⁶⁷ See Page 122.

"Relief started at 7.30 A.M. Each man instructed to carry 1 pr. Dry sox and to return their wet sox when dry ones were sent up to them. Every man rubbed whale oil on his feet before moving off. Relief complete 10.25 A.M. Casualties during relief 1 O.R. killed and 4 wounded. This happened near KOREK on the way in when a salvo of 5.9's caught the tail of the line going over the ridge (GRAVENSTAFEL RIDGE).

"We took over nearly 10,000 rounds S.A.A. at each position ... The enemy harassing fire seems heavier and steadier than during the previous tour in ...

"Nov. 16th.

"All guns at positions are dug in as well as possible and section officers are living with the men. There are no dug-outs or pill-boxes available. The guns are about 5-10 yards apart.

"Great care has to be taken as regards movement by day owing to enemy aeroplanes which come over frequently flying very low. The weather has improved greatly, not so much rain and it is quite misty in the morning. Enemy shelling is particularly severe at time upon the plank road which parallels the SPREE FARM-GRAVENSTAFEL Road.

"At about 4.00 P.M. to-day, Capt. SIMMONDS, O.C. the 25th Imperial Machine Gun Company (8th Imperial Division), arrived at CAPITOL to arrange for relief of the barrage group of guns.

"Nov. 17th.

"During the operation last night⁶⁸ our guns answered an S.O.S. and fired 19,000 rounds. At about 10.30 P.M. the enemy Artillery opened up heavily with H.E. and gas shells. Our crews had the following casualties; 2 killed, 3 wounded, and 4 gassed.

"Barrage group relieved this A.M. by 15 guns of the 25th Imperial Machine Gun Company. Relief complete at 11.00 A.M. No casualties during relief. 10,000 rounds S.A.A. handed over at each position, 500,000 rounds in dump at Waterloo, 100,000 rounds at Transport Lines. 10 belt boxes per gun handed over. The morning was quite misty so that no observation could be obtained by enemy aeroplanes.

"Extra guns, belts, spare water cans, stored for emergency at NILE HOUSE, brought out by this Company."⁶⁹

Third and Fourth Divisions Relieved.

The Third and Fourth Divisions were relieved on November 18th, the Fourth Division by the Thirty-third Division (British) and the Third by the Eighth Division (British). Upon Relief both Divisions moved S. and went into Rest in the FIRST ARMY Area; Fourth Divisional H.Q. moved to MERVILLE on the 18th and went on to AUGHEL on the 24th, remaining there during the rest period. Third Divisional H.Q. moved to NORRENT FONTES, 6 miles S. of AIRE, on the 18th.

Relief and Move of Fourth M.G. "Bn."

Machine Gun Companies of the Thirty-third Division (British) relieved the Fourth Cdn. Divl. M.G. "Battalion" Companies as follows:-

Fourth Canadian M.G. "Battalion" Unit.	Thirty-third Division Relieving Unit.	Date
10th C.M.G. Company	100th M.G. Company	Nov. 19
11th C.M.G. Company	98th M.G. Company	Nov. 17
12th C.M.G. Company	99th M.G. Company	Nov. 18
16th C.M.G. Company	248th M.G. Company	Nov. 19

Companies proceeded on Relief, to Rest Area, part of the journey being made by Motor Lorry and part by Marching. The 11th and 12th Companies arrived at their Billets in BEUGIN, 4 miles S. of BRUAY, on November 22nd, by way of BRANDHOEK (11th Company on the 17th), CAESTRE (20th), MERVILLE (20th) and BUSNES (21st). The 10th and 16th Companies reached BUSNES on the 22nd, journeying by

⁶⁸ See Page 122.

⁶⁹ 7th C.M.G. Company War Diary for November, 1917.

way of CYCLING and TAY Camps, near POPERINGHE (19th) and MERVILLE (21st). From BUSNES, these Companies marched on the 23rd to their final destination, the 10th Company to CAMBLAIN-CHATELAIN, the 16th Company to DIEVAL.

Relief and Move of Third M.G. "Bn."

The Third Cdn. Divl. M.G. "Battalion" was relieved by Companies of the 8th Division (British), viz., the 23rd, 24th, 25th and 218th. Barrage Guns were taken over on November 17th, Local Defence Guns on the following day. Companies moved, on relief, to the Rest Area. The 8th and 15th Companies were billeted together in rest, at the village of FIEFS, where the 15th Company arrived on the 18th and the 8th Company, on the following day. These Units moved S. by way of VLAMERTINGHE (16th) and ROBEQ (17th and 18th). The 7th and 9th Companies journeyed together by way of St. FLORIS (19th) to NEDON (20th). Here they remained until the 23rd, when they marched to their permanent Billets, the 7th Company to LAIRES and the 9th to AUMERVAL.

1st C.M.M.G. Bde. Moves South.

The 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade moved from York Camp to Billets in PERNES on November 18th. The Route S. was through MARBECQUE, ST. VENANT and LILLIERS. The Brigade left YORK CAMP at 11.30 A.M. and arrived at their destination at 8.00 P.M.

The G.O.C. Canadian Corps handed over command of the Line in the PASSCHENDAELE Sector to the G.O.C. VIII Corps on November 18th. On the same day, Canadian Corps H.Q. opened at CAMBLAIN L'ABBE. The Canadian Corps assumed Command of the LENS, AVION and MERICOURT Sections from the I and XIII Corps at 12.00 Noon, November 20th.

+++ Map entitled "PASSCHENDAELE OPERATIONS. CANADIAN CORPS." +++

CONCLUSION.

M.G. Organisation Tested.

Canadian Machine Gunners put to good use, at PASSCHENDAELE, the "Spurs" which they had won at VIMY RIDGE. During the relatively quiet months of Trench Warfare in the Summer of 1917, they had not been idle, and the constant Training and Instructions carried out in these months bore abundant fruit in the Operations of October and November. Machine Gun Organisation, being gradually evolved under the direction of the Corps Machine Gun Officer, Lt.-Col. Brutinel, D.S.O., proved its worth and efficiency at every step. Divisional H.Q. "Battalions," formed on August 23rd, 1917,⁷⁰ were for the first time subjected to a thorough test in the various moves entailed by these Operations, and in the Operations themselves. The advantages of this Organisation were clearly demonstrated: its weaknesses also, were revealed.

Effects of Battle on Tactical Theory.

The Theory of Tactical Handling of Machine Guns, which had undergone such radical changes since 1916, was now being stabilized. The experience of our Machine Gunners at PASSCHENDAELE helped very greatly in giving Tactical Theory a definite form and content. Principles of Employment of Machine Guns in Attack and Defence, hitherto in a more or less experimental stage, were now established beyond question.

Our Machine Gun Barrages were never more effective than in the Battle of PASSCHENDAELE. The system of Communications and methods of Control of these Guns previously employed were again proved sound. Consolidation Guns, going forward with the Infantry, contributed greatly toward the Defence of captured ground. These Guns were employed to the best advantage when a close Liaison was maintained between Forward Guns and the Infantry Battalions with which they co-operated.

Liaison With Infantry.

Successful Co-operation of Machine Guns with Infantry depends as much upon the knowledge of Machine Gun tactics possessed by the Infantry Commander concerned, and the interest which he takes in the employment of these weapons, as upon the energy and ability of the Machine Gun Officer in charge

⁷⁰ See Part 1, Page 95.

of the Guns. No finer example could be found of Liaison between Mobile Machine Guns and Infantry in Action, than that of the 16th Company Guns, under Lieut. MONTAGNON, M.C., operating with the 72nd C.I.Bn., on October 30th.⁷¹

Uses of Vickers Gun Crystallized.

The special Characteristics of the Vickers Gun, and the work which those special characteristics fitted it to do, were made still more obvious by the weather and consequent ground conditions at PASSCHENDAELE. The success of our Machine Gun Barrage Batteries and the fine achievements of our Mobile and Sniping Guns showed alike the scope and the limitations of the Vickers Gun. Once in Position the Vickers Gun could deliver Fire, either Indirect or Direct, with equal efficiency, but it could not compete with the Lewis Gun, its lighter contemporary, in rapidity either of reaching initial Positions or of changing from one Position to another. The difficulties of movement caused by the muddy condition of the ground at PASSCHENDAELE, made the contrast between the Vickers and Lewis Guns more marked, and subsequent to these Operations, there was less and less tendency, on the part of the higher Infantry Command, to confuse the functions of these two weapons.

Why Casualties Were Heavy.

Casualties suffered were heavy, for various reasons. The Frontage of Attack was relatively narrow; as the Attack progressed our Front became more and more of a Salient into the German Line. Artillery Fire could therefore be brought to bear upon the Canadian Corps on a narrow Front from 3 sides. The severity of hostile Shelling was mainly responsible for the large number of Casualties. There was no means of getting away from enemy Artillery Fire; no Communication Trenches, few serviceable Fire Trenches, no Dugouts. Only a small proportion of the Personnel could be accommodated in the limited amount of Shelter provided by captured Pill Boxes.

Enemy Gas Shelling accounted for a large toll of Casualties. The wet soil retained the poisonous Gases long after Gas-shell Bombardment had ceased. The low, marshy ground in the valleys of the RAVEBEEK and HAVEBEEK was never quite free from gas while the Canadian Corps was in the Area, so that, quite apart from Casualties inflicted during enemy gas Shelling, a great many Men were evacuated, gassed or sick, as a result of breathing a gas-polluted atmosphere for several successive days.

Even the Transport Lines were the scene of numerous Casualties to the Men and horses. Both POTIJZE and Camp "X," ST. JEAN, were frequently shelled by enemy High Velocity Guns. On the night of November 4th/5th, 70 Rounds, High Velocity Shells, were fired on POTIJZE and its vicinity between 11.30 P.M. and 4.30 A.M. In the 5th Company, 5 Casualties to Other Ranks occurred during the night. In the same Company, 2 Saddle Horses and 2 Light Draught Horses were killed and 1 Saddle Horse and 11 Light Draught Horses, wounded. The 6th Company had 7 Other Ranks wounded by this Shelling. On November 11th, while sitting in the Officers' Mess at Camp "X," ST. JEAN, Lieut. HEATH (1st Company) was mortally wounded by a fragment from a Shell exploding close by. A Mess Orderly was also wounded by this Shell.

German Aeroplanes bombed the Rear Areas day and night whenever the weather permitted. In fine weather, Gotha Squadrons, with protective Aeroplanes, flew over our Billeting Area as many as 3 times in daylight, dropping Bombs on Road Traffic, Tents and Transport Lines. At 11.00 A.M., Nov. 12th, a Bomb, dropped at POTIJZE, wounded 3 Other Ranks of the 14th Company and 2 of the 11th Company. On the same day 1 Other Rank in the 1st Company was killed and 1 Other Rank wounded by enemy Bombs.

Casualties Illustrated.

All these cause combined to make our losses heavy. Conditions remained unchanged throughout the Canadian Corps Tour. The following Tables show Machine Gun Casualties to the Fourth "Battalion" for Phases VI and VI, and to the First "Battalion" for the last 2 Phases:-

(a) Fourth M.G. "Battalion" Casualties from October 25th to November 1st:-⁷²

UNIT	Killed	Wounded	TOTAL
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⁷¹ See Page 81.

⁷² Fourth Cdn. Div. Report on PASSCHENDAELE Operations, October 1917.

	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.
10th C.M.G. Company	1	6	2	50	3	56
11th C.M.G. Company		1	3	28	3	19
12th C.M.G. Company	1	4	1	13	2	17
16th C.M.G. Company	1	7	1	26	2	33
TOTAL	3	18	7	107	10	125

(b) First M.G. "Battalion" Casualties from Midnight, November 1st/2nd, to Noon, November 15th:-⁷³

UNIT	Killed		Wounded		Missing		TOTAL	
	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.	Off.	O.R.
1st C.M.G. Company	1	7	5	22		1	6	30
2nd C.M.G. Company		10		27	1	1	1	38
3rd C.M.G. Company		7	1	41		2	1	50
13th C.M.G. Company		2		32				34
TOTAL	1	26	6	122	1	4	8	152

Resume of Casualties.

The Following is a resume of Casualties to Active Units of the Canadian Machine Gun Corps during the 4 Phases of the PASSCHENDAELE Operations:-

UNIT	Period	Off.	O.R.	TOTAL
First Cdn. Div'l. M.G. Bn.	Nov. 2nd to 15th.	8	152	160
Second Cdn. Div'l. M.G. Bn.	Nov. 2nd to 12th.	8	159	167
Third Cdn. Div'l. M.G. Bn.	Oct. 26th to Nov. 1st.	9	133	142
Fourth Cdn. Div'l. M.G. Bn.	Oct. 26th to Nov. 1st.	10	125	135
1st C.M.M.G. Brigade and Attached Batteries	Oct. 25th to Nov. 15th.	9	86	95
	TOTAL Casualties	44	655	699

Supply of Reinforcements.

Arrangements made for the supply of Reinforcements worked excellently. Officers and Other Ranks were sent up to Units in the Line from the Advanced Reinforcement Depot, at YORK CAMP, a few hours after Casualties in Units had occurred. In the period from November 2nd to November 12th, the 6th Company had 17 Other Ranks, killed, and 1 Officer and 48 Other Ranks wounded, a total of 1 Officer and 65 Other Ranks Casualties. In the same period, 3 Officers and 35 Other Ranks were received by this Unit as Reinforcements.

Excellence of Fresh Drafts.

By the end of Phase VII the allotted number of Reinforcements maintained in France⁷⁴, viz. 10% of the Strength of Active Units, had been used up: from this time on, reinforcements consisted of Men freshly arrived from England, a large proportion of whom had never been under Fire. In one case a Barrage Battery was reduced to 2 Gunners per Gun and these Gunners were fresh Drafts. Lieut.-Col. BRUTINEL, in a letter to the Corps Commander, pays a high tribute to these Men and to the Canadian Machine Gun Depot at SEAFORD, Commanded by Lieut.-Col. BALFOUR, D.S.O.:-

⁷³ First Cdn. Div. Report on PASSCHENDAELE Operations, November 1917.

⁷⁴ Cdn. Corps. M.G.36/-d, 9-11-17.

"All Batteries remained in action, under the severest conditions ever experienced ... This does the greatest credit to the energy and resourcefulness of the Officers and N.C.O.'s of the Canadian Machine Gun Corps, but it was rendered possible chiefly by the very high standard of training attained in the Canadian Machine Gun Depot in England, and the Discipline, and Esprit de Corps with which the fresh Drafts were imbued."⁷⁵

The Corps Commander's Tribute to Machine Gunners.

The Battle of PASSCHENDAELE was a test of M.G. Organisation, of M.G. Instruction and of the Machine Gun itself. But more than anything else, it was a test of the physical and moral fibre and Discipline of our Men, and they stood the test in superhuman fashion, rising magnificently superior to every difficulty placed in their way, whether by Nature or a contriving foe. At the conclusion of Operations the Corps Commander, addressed the following appreciative letter to the Corps Machine Gun Officer:-

"Canadian Corps Headquarters,
10th November, 1917.

"Dear Brutinel,-

"I have read with great interest and profound pride, your report of the 9th instant with reference to the part played by the Machine Gun Units in our Recent Operations.

"I regret that the Casualties have been so high, but these have resulted from the special efforts made by the enemy to destroy the Machine Gun Crews from whom they had suffered so much.

"All prisoners have testified to the great losses caused the enemy by our Machine Gun Fire, while our own Infantry are loud in their praises as to the support rendered by our Machine Gunners.

"That the men of the Machine Gun Corps kept their guns in action under the conditions experienced, testifies in the highest possible manner to their splendid discipline and fine fighting spirit.

"I am glad to receive and will communicate to the authorities in England, your testimony as to the high standard of training and discipline noticeable in recent drafts.

"I would like to have an opportunity of personally conveying to Machine Gunners my appreciation of the splendid part played by them in the winning of our recent battles.

Ever Yours Faithfully
(sgd) A.E. CURRIE.

"Lieut. Colonel Brutinel, D.S.O.
Corps Machine Gun Officer."

C.M.G.O.'s Letter of Appreciation.

The following letter was sent by the Corps Machine Gun Officer to each Commanding Officer of the Cdn. M.G. Corps, along with copies of the Corps Commanders letters:-

"H.Q. Canadian Corps,
C.M.G.C.,
Nov. 16th, 1917.

"I am sending you herewith copies of a letter I have received from the Corps Commander and which he has authorized me to circulate through the Units of the Canadian Machine Gun Corps.

"That letter is a very high tribute paid to the discipline, energy and unfaltering courage of the Machine Gunners, and I am sure that they will be very proud of the early recognition given to their valour by the Corps Commander.

"The high standard of efficiency obtained by all Machine Gun Units in all branches of training and organisation, has been brought sharply in evidence by the severity of the test to which it was submitted.

⁷⁵ See Part 1 Page 129.

"The fine example of daring, initiative, and fruitful leadership on the part of the Officer commanding Mobile Machine Guns stands out with particular brilliance.

"By their physical and moral endurance, their spirit of sacrifice and absolute devotion to duty, the Barrage Machine Gun Batteries succeeded in maintaining their Batteries in action regardless of the most adverse conditions of ground and weather, and of the awful losses inflicted on them by the Hostile Artillery.

"There is plentiful evidence of the severe casualties that the Machine Gun Batteries inflicted on the enemy.

"The standard set by the Canadian Machine Gunners, during the operations leading to the capture of PASSCHENDAELE RIDGE, can possibly be equaled, - it cannot be surpassed.

"Yours Sincerely,
(Sgd.) R. BRUTINEL"

CANADIAN MOTOR MACHINE GUN BRIGADES

NOVEMBER 18th TO JULY 30th, 1918.

1ST CANADIAN MOTOR MACHINE GUN BRIGADE AND ATTACHED BATTERIES : NOVEMBER 18th, 1917, TO MARCH 22nd, 1918.

1st C.M.M.G.B. Nov. 18th to Dec. 31st 1917.

The 1st Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade and the 3 attached Batteries remained in their Billets in PERNES⁷⁶ from November 18th, 1917, until December 31st, 1917 when they moved to a new Camp at VERDREL, a small Village about 2 miles S. of BARLIN. Advantage was taken of the time spent in PERNES to rest and refit the Units and to train the Officers and Men who arrived as Reinforcements during and immediately after the Battle of PASSCHENDAELE.

Defensive Positions Occupied, Jan., 1918.

For the greater part of January, 1918, a Battery of the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade occupied Defensive Positions behind the Canadian Corps on the VIMY Front in accordance with the following Instructions:-

- (1) "1st Cdn. M.M.G. Bde., will place 6 Machine Guns with their Detachments at the disposal of the G.O.C., 3rd Cdn. Div., as a temporary measure, from the night 28th/29th December inclusive.
- (2) "These Machine Guns will take up positions in the RED Line in the Northern part of the 3rd Cdn. Divl. Area, under instructions to be issued by the G.O.C., 3rd Cdn. Div.
- (3) "These Guns will only be attached to the 3rd Cdn. Div. till such time as the Forward Defences, particularly wire and new Machine Gun Emplacements in the Northern area of the 3rd Cdn. Div. have been put into such state as to permit of the re-adjustment of the Machine Guns of the 3rd Cdn. Divl. M.G. Battalion. The 3rd Cdn. Div. will report to Corps Headquarters when this re-adjustment has been carried out. The Machine Guns of the 1st C.M.M.G. Bde. will then be withdrawn."⁷⁷

The Yukon Battery was the first Battery to be placed under the Tactical Control of the Third Canadian Division, and, on December 29th, 1917, its Guns were placed on the E. side of LOOS to strengthen the Defences of HILL 70. This Battery was relieved by "A" Battery, 1st C.M.M.G. Bde., on the evening of January 6th, 1918, and 8 days after "B" Battery relieved "A" Battery in the Line. During these Tours the Batteries carried out Harassing Fire at night, and during the day improved the Emplacements, Dugouts and Trenches occupied by them. On January 25th, "B" Battery was relieved by Machine Guns of the First Cdn. Division. Enemy Shelling was comparatively light on the area occupied by the Motor Machine Gunners and no Casualties were suffered. The Batteries out of the Line were kept busy in completing the construction of their new Camp, in Training in the Vickers gun, in Indirect and Barrage fire, and in Physical and Infantry Drill.

VIMY RIDGE Defences.

Early in 1918, in preparation against the very obvious offensive intentions of the enemy, the Canadian Corps began to organise and construct a comprehensive Area of defences of great Depth, in the VIMY RIDGE Sector. The Scheme consisted of successive Defensive systems running roughly parallel to the Front and connected with one another by Switch Lines. The preparation and execution of this Plan of Defence in Depth was based upon a framework of Machine Gun Positions. Numerous Machine Gun Emplacements and Dugouts to accommodate the Gun Crews were built at carefully sited points. The Emplacements were protected by Wire Entanglements, which were so placed as to be enfiladed over their entire length by the Fire of the Machine Guns.

Construction of M.G. Emplacements.

In connection with the construction of the Machine Gun Emplacements of these Defences, the B.O., G.S. Canadian Corps wrote to the Corps Machine Gun Officer, Lieut.-Col. BRUTINEL, as follows:-

⁷⁶ See Page 128.

⁷⁷ Canadian Corps G. 707/19-5 dated Dec. 27th, 1917.

"With reference to the ... proposed machine gun emplacements for the VIMY defences, I consider it urgent to get some sort of emplacements completed without delay.

"As the concrete situation is not promising, and as tunnellers are fully employed at present further forward, I think we should, as a temporary measure, construct the sleeper and rail type whenever this can be done without sacrificing concealment, and this condition obtains in most of the sites in question.

"The Division at present has its hands full with work further forward on account of the damage to trenches following the recent thaw, so I think it would be advisable to employ the Motor Machine Gun Brigade on constructing this work."⁷⁸

On February 6th, 1918, the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade received Orders to construct 10 Machine Gun Emplacements in the VIMY Defences. The Batteries proceeded independently to Billets in Dugouts and small Huts in or near VIMY, the Yukon Battery being the first to start work on the 8th. Each Battery returned to the Camp at VERDREL on completion of the work allotted to it. The Yukon and "A" and "B" Batteries had already finished their Tasks, when new Instructions were given to the Motor Brigade to construct an additional series of M.G. Emplacements in the VIMY RIDGE Defences. On March 1st, "A" and "B" Batteries, followed later by the Borden and Eaton Batteries, moved into Billets on the ridge conveniently near to their work. The Guns and all other fighting Equipment were taken to the Forward Area by the Batteries. In case of a hostile Offensive the Batteries were to occupy Positions in the VIMY Defences until Orders to move were received from Cdn. Corps H.Q. Arrangements for occupying these Positions were made in advance in consultation with the Senior Officer of the Machine Gun Company in that Area. The Yukon Battery remained at VERDREL in Reserve and carried on with Machine Gun Training and Drill.

Corps Commander Inspects M.M.G.B. Camp.

While 4 of the Motor Batteries were building Emplacements on VIMY RIDGE, the Cdn. Corps Commander, General SIR ARTHUR CURRIE, on March 9th, inspected the Yukon Battery, the Motor Brigade Camp and Transport at VERDREL.

GERMAN OFFENSIVE : MARCH 21ST, 1918, TO APRIL 10TH, 1918. 1ST CANADIAN MOTOR MACHINE GUN BRIGADES AND ATTACHED BATTERIES.

1st C.M.M.G.B. Ordered to the AMIENS Front.

Most unexpectedly, the 1st C.M.M.G. Bde, received in the afternoon of March 22nd, 1918, an Order⁷⁹ from Canadian Corps Headquarters to "proceed tomorrow to AMIENS and on arrival come under Orders of Fifth Army." The Brigade and the attached Batteries were to leave the Canadian Corps Area before 6.00 A.M., March 23rd. Steps were immediately taken to withdraw the Batteries from the Forward Area, and to prepare the 8 Armoured Cars and all the Transport for Action on the AMIENS-St. QUENTIN Front.

THIRD and FIFTH ARMIES' Front, Morning, March 21st.

By mid-March, 1918, the possibility of a German Attack had ceased to be a matter of speculation, and on March 19th, its imminence became very pronounced on the Fronts of the THIRD and FIFTH ARMIES, holding the 2 Southernmost portions of the British Front. At 4.00 A.M. March 21st, 1918, just prior to the German Attack, the Line held by these 2 Armies, from S. to N., ran roughly as follows:-

From 2 miles W. of ST. GOBAIN⁸⁰ (junction of FIFTH ARMY with the THIRD FRENCH ARMY) - W. and N. of la FERE - along the E. side of the Road to HAMEGICOURT - across the CANAL de l'OISE at BERTHENICOURT - W. of ITANCOURT - S.-W. and W. of ST. QUENTIN - E. of HARGICOURT W. of GONNELIEU (junction of FIFTH and THIRD ARMIES) - W. of MARCOING - S. of GRAINCOURT S. and W. of QUEANT - W. of

⁷⁸ Canadian Corps G.769/21-2, dated January 28th, 1918.

⁷⁹ Canadian Corps Operation Order No. 185, dated March 22nd, 1918.

⁸⁰ ST. GOBAIN is 10 miles W. of LAON.

FONTAINE-les-CROISILLES- E. of SHERISY, MONCHY-le-PREUX and ROEUX (junction of THIRD and FIRST ARMIES.)

The intentions were to separate the British Army from the French Army, and then destroy the former as a Fighting organisation. The Germans assaulted the British Line from the OISE RIVER, on the S. to the SCARPE ROVER, on the N. - about 50 miles. The Attack was made in considerable strength along the whole Front, but it was delivered with special violence on the Front of the FIFTH ARMY. The Sector between St. GOBAIN and GONNELIEU was held from right to left, by the III, XVIII, XIX and VII Corps, which formed the FIFTH ARMY under the command of General SIR HUBERT GOUGH. The Defences in each Corps Front were organized into 2 Systems: the Forward Zone and the Battle Zone extending to a Depth of 1200 yds. and 1000 yds., respectively.

Initial German Attack, March 21st, 1918.

Favoured by dense fog and supported by a 6-hour intense Artillery and Trench Mortar Bombardment, the assaulting German Infantry Columns reached the Line of Resistance in the Forward Zone of the FIFTH ARMY at about 10.00 A.M., March 21st, 1918. Notwithstanding the strenuous and determined Resistance offered by the British Troops, the overwhelming numerical superiority of the enemy enabled him to overrun the Forward Zone early on in the first day. Out of 8 whole Battalions in the Forward Zone of the XVIII Corps, less than 50 Men ever got back to the Battle Zone; the remainder were either killed, wounded or taken Prisoners. It soon became manifest that the first stages of the Battle were going in favor of the enemy. The main Task of the Troops at close grips with the enemy was to delay the advance of the Germans as long as possible, thus upset his carefully laid Plans of Attack and also gain time for our hard-pressed Infantry to withdraw gradually to a strong Line of Resistance.

FIFTH ARMY Line, Evening March 21st.

In the evening of March 21st, the FIFTH ARMY Line ran approximately as follows:-

The original Line S. of la FERE - through FARGNIERS and LIEZ, E. of the CROZART CANAL - thence N.-E. to VENDEUIL - thence N.-E. to LY-FONTAINE - Railway Embankment between LIZEROLLES and ESSIGNY-le-GRAND (junction of III and XVIII Corps) - thence N.-W. across the SOMME between CONTESCOURT and FONTAINE-les-CLERCS - S. and W. of ROUPY - W. of SAVY - E. of HOLNON WOOD - N.-W. across the OMIGNON RIVER opposite BIHECOURT (junction of XVIII and XIX Corps) - through le VERGUIER - W. of the BOIS du GRAND PRIEL - E. of TEMPLEUX-le-GUERARD (junction of XIX and VII Corps) - W. of EPEHY - in front of Railway between GOUZEAUCOURT and VILLERS-POUICH (junction of VII and V Corps, THIRD ARMY).

Withdrawal to SOMME Line, Night March 22nd/23rd.

Most of the Infantry Brigades in Action on the FIFTH ARMY Front had been reduced to fighting with only 2 Battalions each.⁸¹ On March 22nd, the enemy continued to advance through the Battle Zone and during the night March 22nd/23rd the FIFTH ARMY Line was generally withdrawn to the Left Bank of the SOMME. On the Right, the III Corps held the Line of the CANAL de ST. QUENTIN as far N. as JUSSY. The XVIII Corps extended the Line with the Thirty-sixth Division (including the 61st Inf. Brigade of the Twentieth Division) in Positions between JUSSY and SOMMETTE-EAUCOURT, the Thirtieth Division, between SOMMETTE-EAUCOURT and CANIZY and the Sixty-first Division, between CANIZY and the Left Boundary of the Corps mid-way between VOYENNES and BETHENCOURT. The Twentieth Division, which had been in G.H.Q. Reserve, was placed at the disposal of the XVIII Corps on the opening day of the Battle. The remaining 2 Brigades of this Division, the 60th and 59th covered the withdrawal of the XVIII Corps to the SOMME Line, and on the morning of March 23rd they took over the Front held by the Sixty-first Division, which was withdrawn into Corps Reserve. The XIX Corps conformed to this movement by gradually withdrawing to the SOMME from the Line MONCHY-LAGACHE - VRAIGNES - E. of BEAUMETZ - E. of BRUSLE. The VII Corps also started to move back to the Line DOINGT - BOIS des FLACQUES - BUSSU - AIZECOURT - NURLU - EQUANCOURT (in touch with V Corps, THIRD ARMY).

Enemy Across the SOMME; March 23rd.

On the morning of March 23rd, the enemy effected a Crossing over the SOMME, through the Town of HAM, and forced 1 of the Thirtieth Division Brigades to retire in the direction of EHMERY-HALLON.

⁸¹ At this period a British Infantry Brigade had been reduced from 4 to 3 Battalions.

In the afternoon, the 60th Inf. Brigade, Twentieth Division, counter-attacked in a South-Easterly direction to drive the enemy back across the CANAL. The Counter-attack progressed well as far as the SUCRERIE, 500 yds. W. of the HAM Bridge, but it was held up there by Machine Gun Fire coming from the HAM Railway Station and from across the SOMME. The enemy made numerous unsuccessful attempts to effect other Crossings on the XVIII Corps Front, notably at OFFOY and BETHENCOURT. In view of the enemy pressure in this Area, the 182nd Inf. Bde., Sixty-first Division, was placed at the disposal of the Thirtieth Division, and the other 2 Brigades of the Sixty-first Division, the 183rd and 184th Brigades, were placed under the Orders of the Twentieth Division for Counter-attack Purposes. In the afternoon, the III Corps was placed under the Orders of the THIRD FRENCH ARMY, and the Ninth French Division was advancing to support the Fourteenth Division, holding the Left Flank of the III Corps. At the same time, the Tenth, Twenty-second and Sixty-second French Divisions were on the way from NOYON to support the XVIII Corps.

FIFTH ARMY Line; Evening March 23rd.

By the evening of March 23rd the enemy had forced back the Left Flank of the III Corps from JUSSY to CUGNY. This movement compelled the Thirty-sixth Division, on the Right of the XVIII Corps, to draw back its Right Flank. The XVIII Corps Front then ran roughly along the Line CUGNY - EAUCORT - AUBIGNY - FLAMICOURT - EPPEVILLE - CAHIZY - thence along the Western Bank of the SOMME to BETHENCOURT. The XIX Corps had completed its withdrawal to the Left Bank of the SOMME and continued the Line as far N. as PERONNE, where the Situation was uncertain. The enemy had been exerting, throughout the day, a strong pressure against the VII Corps, which had retired to the Line SAINTE RADEGONDE - W. of MONT ST. QUENTIN - across the CANAL DU NORD to E. of CLERY-sur-SOMME. Near VAUX WOOD the enemy held the Line of the CANAL du NORD at MOISLAINS. The Germans continued to press hard with large Forces against the FIFTH ARMY, whose Task was to delay the enemy advance until the arrival of Reinforcements. As the Battle developed and Reinforcements became available, the French and the THIRD ARMY (British), respectively, were to take over the Left and Right Flank of the FIFTH ARMY. British Troops were already moving from the Northern part of the Front to reinforce the THIRD ARMY. The 1st Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade and attached Batteries were placed at the disposal of the FIFTH ARMY to assist in checking the enemy advance.

1st C.M.M.G.B. Moves from VIMY to AMIENS Front.

In the afternoon of March 22nd, 1918, when the 1st C.M.M.G. Bde. received Instructions to move the following morning to the FIFTH ARMY Area, 4 of the Motor Batteries were on the VIMY RIDGE and the remaining Battery was in Camp at VERDREL. At about 2.00 A.M., March 23rd, the 4 Batteries from the Forward Area arrived at VERDREL, and at 5.30 A.M., the whole of the Brigade moved as 1 Column to AMIENS. The 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade was commanded by Lieut.-Col. WALKER, D.S.O., M.C., who, up to March 17th, 1918, had been in charge of the Machine Gun Squadron of the Canadian Corps Cavalry. Lieut.-Col. WALKER's Command consisted of the following Units:-

"A" Battery, 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade, 8 Vickers Guns, mounted on 4 Armoured Cars.

"B" Battery, 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade, 8 Vickers Guns, mounted on 4 Armoured Cars.

"C" Battery, Borden M.M.G. Battery, 8 Vickers Guns, carried in light Box Cars.

"D" Battery, Eaton M.M.G. Battery, 8 Vickers Guns, carried in light Box Cars.

"E" Battery, Yukon M.M.G. Battery, 8 Vickers Guns, carried in light Box Cars.

All 5 Batteries were grouped together under the 1 Command, known as the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade.⁸²

Message from Corps Commander.

Just before leaving the Canadian Corps Area, the 1st C.M.M.G. Bde. received the following message from the Canadian Corps Commander, SIR ARTHUR CURRIE:-

"The Corps Commander wishes you the best of luck and has every confidence that you will do more than well."

⁸² See Part 1, Page 35.

Tasks of Motor Brigade.

The Motor Batteries proceeded through DIVION, ST. POL, and FREVEN and arrived at the outskirts of AMIENS at about 12.45 P.M., March 23rd. In accordance with further Instructions received from the AMIENS Town-Major, the Brigade drove through the City of AMIENS, to the FIFTH ARMY H.Q., at VILLERS-BRETONNEUX, where they arrived at 4.00 P.M. The Commanding Officer and his Second in Command (Major BATTERSBY, M.C.) had gone ahead to report to the FIFTH ARMY H.Q. After the Situation had been explained, it was decided to utilize the Motor Machine Gun Brigade in filling dangerous Gaps at any point on the ARMY Front. The Army Commander, General GOUGH, expressed his satisfaction at the timely arrival of the Batteries, which, he said, were his only available Reinforcements. He also expressed a wish to see the Men of the Brigade before they went into Action; but this was impossible as most of the Batteries were dispatched forward during the afternoon and evening.

Immediately after the arrival of the Motor Machine Gunners at VILLERS-BRETONNEUX (4.00 P.M.), the Eaton and Yukon Batteries, under Capt. MEURLING, M.C., were detailed to report to the G.O.C., XVIII Corps, at ROYE. A few hours later, in compliance with an Order from the FIFTH ARMY, the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade and Borden Battery, under Capt. HOLLAND, M.C., proceeded to CORBIE, where they came under the Orders of the VII Corps. "A" Battery was held in Reserve at VILLERS-BRETONNEUX until the following day, March 24th, when it was hurriedly sent forward to fill a Gap on the XIX Corps Front.

At 9.30 P.M., March 23rd, the Eaton and Yukon Batteries reported to the XVIII Corps H.Q., at ROYE. After the Officers and Men had had a hot meal, Capt. MEURLING was instructed to take his Group to NESLE, where it would come under the Orders of the Twentieth Division. Owing to the great confusion on the Roads caused by numerous disorganized Lines of Traffic running in both direction, the 2 Batteries were delayed on the way and did not reach NESLE until 2.00 A.M., March 24th. Billeting arrangements were made, and after insuring that the Guns, Transport and all other equipment was ready for immediate Action, the Men were allowed to retire.

Tasks Allotted to the Eaton and Yukon Batteries.

At 5.00 A.M., Capt. MEURLING accompanied the G.O.C., 183rd Infantry Brigade, on a reconnaissance of the Twentieth Division Front. The enemy had gained a footing on the Western Bank of the CANAL N. of BETHENCOURT, thus threatening the Left Flank of the Twentieth Division and creating a Gap between the XVIII and XIX Corps. To re-establish the Line at this point the 183rd Brigade was to launch a Counter-attack, late in the morning with the object of retaking BETHENCOURT and driving the enemy back across the CANAL. The right half of the Twentieth Division Front, held by the 60th Infantry Brigade, was being hard pressed by the enemy, who was trying to effect Crossings at CANIZY, OFFOY and VOYENNES. As a result of his reconnaissance of the Line, and in compliance with orders received from the Twentieth Division Headquarters, Capt. MEURLING detailed 4 Machine Guns of the Yukon Battery, under Lieut. BABB, M.C., to report to the 60th Inf. Brigade Headquarters at BACQUENCOURT and the remaining 4 Guns, under Lieut. VOSBURGH, were to cover an Artillery Brigade N.-W. of NESLE. Capt. HARKNESS, M.C., in charge of the 8 Guns of the Eaton Battery, was to support the 183rd Brigade in its Counter-attack near BETHENCOURT. The 3 Detachments left NESLE for their different destinations between 10.00 and 11.30 A.M. March 24th. Capt. MEURLING established his Group Headquarters at NESLE in close touch with the Twentieth Division.

4 Yukon Battery Guns on Twentieth Div. Right.

When Lieut. BABB reported to BACQUENCOURT at 10.45 A.M. March 24th, the Situation on the 60th Infantry Brigade Front was not clear. The enemy was exerting a continual pressure in an endeavour to break through towards NESLE from the direction of HAM. Farther S., he was attempting to approach GRECOURT from the S.-E. and E. Under the Instructions of the G.O.C., 60th Brigade, the 4 Machine Guns of the Yukon Battery were placed, at about 11.30 A.M., in Positions in front of the HOMBLEUX Cemetery. At Noon, 1 of the Guns was taken forward to reinforce the Infantry in the Front Line, which was little more than a line of Skirmishers. Shortly after, the Thirtieth Division, on the right, began to retire and the Right Flank of the 60th Brigade was exposed. In view of the Situation on the Right and the excessive pressure of the enemy at VOYENNES and BETHENCOURT, the Infantry began to fall back to the Line of the LIBERMONT CANAL - MESNIL - St. NICAISE. No warning of this move had been given to the Motor Machine Gunners operating on the 60th Brigade Front. Noticing the retirement of the Infantry, Lieut. BABB immediately rushed ahead to get in touch with his forward Gun Crew.

Unfortunately, he was severely wounded and taken Prisoner before he reached his Men. The Gun was destroyed and all the members of the Crew became Casualties.

The intense Fighting and intermittent retirements of the last 3 days completely tired and disorganized the Infantry, who were now glad to rally around the other 3 Machine Guns E. of the HOMBLEUX Cemetery. This Position was held and the enemy advance checked until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The 3 Guns obtained excellent Targets, especially on the HAM-NESLE Road, where the enemy advanced in Column. Several belts were fired at Ranges between 800 and 300 yards. Very heavy Casualties were inflicted on the enemy and on several occasions our well-directed Fire prevented German Machine Gunners from bringing their Guns into action. By 4 P.M. our Infantry had withdrawn to the W. Bank of the CANAL. The enemy had forced his way on both Flanks of the Machine Gun Positions: his forward elements advancing from GREYCOURT were 300 yds. S. of HOMBLEUX and a number of German Machine Guns located on HILL 70, between CANIZY and HOMBLEUX, had opened Fire on the Village and Cemetery. The Motor Machine Gunners were, therefore, withdrawn across the CANAL by Lieut. W.J. CAMPBELL, who had assumed command of the Detachment after Lieut. BABB had become a Casualty. In the evening of March 24th, the 3 Yukon Battery Guns were in Positions N.-W. of BREUIL to cover the BACQUENCOURT Bridge.

4 Yukon Battery Guns in Twentieth Div. Centre.

At about Noon March 24th, Lieut. VOSBURGH, in charge of the other half of the Yukon Battery, proceeded, in accordance with Orders from the Twentieth Division, to occupy Positions N.-W. of NESLE. But on arrival at his destination he found out that the Artillery he was to protect had already withdrawn to new Positions farther back. Early in the evening, Capt. MEURLING ordered Lieut. VOSBURGH to join Capt. HARKNESS and reinforce the 183rd Brigade, which was then operating in the vicinity of MAISNIL - ST. NICAISE.

Eaton Battery on Twentieth Division Left.

While Lieut. BABB's Detachment was going into Action on the Right of the Twentieth Division in front of HOMBLEUX, the Eaton Battery. 45 All Ranks, commanded by Capt. HARKNESS, M.C., had reported to the 183rd Infantry Brigade Headquarters at MESNIL - ST. NICAISE. The Task allotted to the Eaton Battery is described by Capt. HARKNESS in his account of the Operation:-

"General SPOONER in command of the 183rd Infantry Brigade outlined the position as follows:- The Germans are crossing the SOMME at BETHENCOURT, supported by Artillery Fire from the vicinity of MATIGNY, VILLECOURT and the Wood W. of the Village were concentration points of enemy Troops. The 183rd Infantry Brigade, about 600 Rifles strong, were to move in a North-Easterly direction from MESNIL-St. NICAISE to launch a counter-attack against BETHENCOURT at about 12.00 noon. A Company of a Battalion of the Royal Scots were to advance simultaneously on BETHENCOURT from the W. As time was very limited and only small scale maps were available, it was impossible to arrange a Barrage to cover the advance of our own Infantry. It was, therefore, decided to send 2 Machine Guns to assist the Royal Scots and the remainder of the Battery to proceed in rear of the attacking Infantry to the forward slope of Hill 80 and support them with direct overhead fire and at the same time harass VILLECOURT.

"Sgt. J. ANDERSON, D.C.M, in command of 2 Guns, proceeded to support the Royal Scots and Lieut. G.A. MARSHALL, with 6 Guns, proceeded to support the Infantry marching on BETHENCOURT from the S.-W. Each Gun carried 2000 rounds of ammunition in belts, An ammunition dump of belt boxes was established on the northern outskirts of MESNIL - St. NICAISE."

GENERAL SPOONER ordered Capt. HARKNESS to remain at his Headquarters.

Coincident with the formation of this plan, the enemy laid a heavy Artillery and Machine Gun Barrage round MESNIL - ST. NICAISE in preparation for a further Advance Westwards from BETHENCOURT. The Eaton Battery had just arrived at the Village when the Barrage came down. Capt. HARKNESS ordered his Men to dismount and to off-load the Guns and Equipment. He then sent his 8 Gun Detachments forward: 6, under Lieut. MARSHALL, to support the Counter-attack on BETHENCOURT, and 2, under Sgt. ANDERSON, to co-operate with Scottish Troops reported to be along the Road leading to PARGNY. The M.T. Drivers were instructed to return with the Cars to Group Headquarters at NESLE. With skilful initiative and daring, the Drivers rushed the Cars one by one through the Barrage.

On their arrival at NESLE the Cars were found to be riddled with Shrapnel and Machine Gun Bullets through the hoods and sides; but none of the Drivers were injured and no engine was damaged.

Action of Eaton Battery Near BETHENCOURT.

On arrival at the Plateau, W. of BETHENCOURT, at about Noon March 24th, Lieut. MARSHALL got in touch with the few Infantry on the ground. Not only were the Infantry unaware of the intention of the 183rd Brigade to counter-attack, but the Germans had already begun to advance from BETHENCOURT towards the Plateau. Our 6 Machine Guns were immediately brought into Action and their Fire was a few minutes later supplemented by the Fire of the 2 Guns under Sgt. ANDERSON. This N.C.O. had proceeded along the MESNIL - ST. NICAISE - PARGNY Road past the intersection of this Road with the MORCHAIN - FONTAINE-les-PARGNY Road. He noticed that the Germans had effected a Crossing at PARGNY but as he had been unable to find the Detachment of Royal Scots, whom he was to assist, he, with his 2 Guns, joined Lieut. MARSHALL's Group. The Fire of the Eaton Battery Machine Guns was to a very large degree responsible for temporarily checking the enemy Advance. Many Casualties were inflicted on the assaulting Forces and on the German Troops crossing the CANAL at BETHENCOURT. At the same time, the Motor Machine Gunners fired on and dispersed Enemy Infantry Groups moving from BETHENCOURT in a South-Westerly direction. The few Infantryman on the Right of our Machine Guns had withdrawn during this Action without advising the Gunners. At about 1.00 P.M., Lieut. MARSHALL, who was the only Officer with the Battery, endeavoured to get in touch with the Infantry on his Left. Instead of friendly Troops, he discovered, in the low ground between the Battery Positions and FONTAINE-les-PARGNY, a large Group of about 500 Germans sitting on the ground and apparently resting. The 8 Machine Guns of the Eaton Battery concentrated at once their Fire on this exceptional target and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, who was completely taken by surprise. Shortly after our guns stopped firing, German Machine Guns located in front and on both sides of the Plateau began to fire on our Gun Crews. In about 15 minutes 50% of the Personnel of the Battery had become Casualties. As the Infantry had withdrawn the Eaton Battery found itself isolated on the Plateau and threatened with the danger of being surrounded.

Messages were sent to Capt. HARKNESS at MESNIL - ST. NICAISE, but the messengers did not return. Lieut. MARSHALL decided to withdraw his Battery and in his account of the Operation he writes: "I sent one of the Gunners back on my motor cycle asking for more ammunition. He failed to return. After the Infantry had withdrawn we were alone. We could see no British Troops on our right and there were none on our Left. We were under heavy fire. Our Ammunition was very low and our usefulness had really ceased until we could get more ammunition. Our surprise on the massed Germans had played itself out. Everyone seemed to have gone but us."

The withdrawal was made by half-batteries Westward toward DRESLINCOURT, the direction of withdrawal of the 183rd Infantry brigade Troops with whom Lieut. MARSHALL had Orders to co-operate. During this move, 1 Gun Crew, under Corporal McKENNA, got detached from the Battery and eventually, after wandering for several hours, joined Capt. HARKNESS. The withdrawal of the Eaton Battery, which commenced between 1.30 and 2.00 P.M., was necessarily slow. Of this withdrawal Lieut. MARSHALL says:-

"We went in with 4 men per Gun; at this time we did not have more than 2 per Crew. Each man's load was double, besides, we lent such aid to our wounded as we could.

"As we withdrew towards DRESLINCOURT, we failed to find any Infantry with which to co-operate. We halted for a while at about 1500 yds. S. of MORCHAIN. Here we were informed by an Infantryman that MESNIL-ST. NICAISE was in the hands of the enemy and that NESLE also had fallen. When we reached the Wood in front of DRESLINCOURT we were told the same story about MESNIL and NESLE by an Infantry Captain who was in command of about 50 Men in the Wood."

The 7 Machine Guns of the Eaton Battery were placed E. and N. of the Wood, which was in the XIX Corps Area. These Positions were occupied only for a short time. The Battery and the Group of 50 Infantrymen moved to new Positions immediately N.-W. of DRESLINCOURT, where a Line was established behind an old Belt of Wire.

At this time the Situation was very obscure. In spite of many efforts, Lieut. MARSHALL was unable to get in touch with Capt. HARKNESS, Capt. MEURLING or the Twentieth Division Troops. His Gun Crews were greatly reduced in numbers and the Ammunition supply had been reduced to only 9 Belts for the whole Battery. The Guns of the Eaton Battery were the only Machine Guns which had been operating that day in that Area. They undoubtedly saved a critical Situation at BETHENCOURT, the

junction of the XVIII and XIX Corps. When the Motor Machine Gunners reached the Plateau W. of BETHENCOURT, circumstances demanded a sudden change of plans from Offensive to Defensive. The rapidity with which the guns were then brought into Action against the advancing enemy bears testimony to the high standard of Training maintained in the Canadian Machine Gun Corps. The steadiness of the gun Crews in holding their Positions after the Infantry had retired, and the successful withdrawal to new Positions, when closely engaged by the enemy, are examples of a high sense of duty and good Discipline. The nature of the Fighting and the exhausted condition of our Infantry gave the Machine Gun Officers an opportunity to exercise initiative and leadership.

Situation Between XVIII and XIX Corps.

To ascertain the Positions of our Troops N. and S. of his Guns near DRESLINCOURT, Lieut. MARSHALL sent 2 small patrols to reconnoitre the ground on both Flanks. Sgt. T.S. CLARK, was sent back with a few Men to get in touch with the Troops in Rear and, if possible, to secure a supply of Ammunition. An Observation Post was established on a near-by haystack. While these parties were being detailed and the Field of Fire of our Machine Guns was being arranged, the Officer in charge of the Group of Infantrymen, N.-W. of DRESLINCOURT, withdrew his Men, for no apparent reason, to positions farther back. The Motor Machine Gunners remained in their places, throughout the afternoon. It was later learned that these Positions were about 2000 yds. in front of the Positions held by our Infantry. Thinking that these Positions were occupied by the enemy, the pilot of one of our Aeroplanes dived down and fired his Machine Gun into them; but, fortunately none of our Gunners was hit. The two Patrols, which Lieut. MARSHALL had sent out to the Right and Left, reported that there were no British Troops for a mile on either Flank. Evidently, the Left Flank of the XVIII Corps had been withdrawn South-Westward and the Right Flank of the XIX Corps, North-Westward, thus creating a Gap of about 3000 yds. between MESNIL - ST. NICAISE and POTTE. It was through this Gap that the Eaton Battery had withdrawn earlier in the afternoon. Sgt. CLARK returned in the evening with the information that the Twenty-fourth Division (XIX Corps) was organizing a Line behind HYENCOURT-le-PETIT. The Troops of this Division were unaware of the presence of our Gun detachments in front of them.

Eaton Battery on XII Corps Front.

Owing to the lack of close Infantry support and the approach of darkness it was thought unwise to maintain the advanced position held by the Eaton Battery. A Machine Gun is not a Weapon of self-defence: the value of direct M.G. Fire on open warfare is lost at night, unless direct observation can be replaced by an Infantry escort to warn the Machine Gunners of the approach of the enemy. Lieut. MARSHALL, therefore, who had failed to get in touch with the Twentieth Division, decided to withdraw his Guns and co-operate with the Twenty-fourth Division in the defence of the new Line they were organizing. The Eaton Battery Guns were placed in positions E. and N. of HYENCOURT-le-PETIT to cover the infantry, who were digging a trench 500 yds. behind the Village. A small amount of Bulk S.A.A., 16 ammunition belts and a few tins of "Bully Beef" were secured from the O.C., 24th Battalion, Machine Gun Corps. At 1.00 A.M., March 25th, when the Infantry were well advanced in the preparation of the new line of Defence, 5 of the Eaton Battery Guns were moved to new positions along the FONCHETTE - OMIECOURT Road. The remaining 2 Machine Guns were left N.-E. of HYENCOURT-le-PETIT to cover 3 Guns of the Twenty-fourth Divisional Artillery, which were still maintaining their Positions in the Village.

Capt. HARKNESS Reinforced by 4 Yukon Battery Machine Guns.

The 183rd Infantry Brigade had suffered heavy Casualties in the Action near BETHENCOURT and its Troops had fallen back rapidly. During the afternoon of March 24th, the Situation in front of MESNIL - ST. NICAISE was very critical. General SPOONER himself went over the right half of his Brigade Front and Captain HARKNESS went over the Left Section to obtain information as to the dispositions of the enemy and our own Troops. Enemy Machine Guns located in ROUY-le-PETIT and on Hill 80 were very active. It was decided to establish with the few remaining Infantry a Line running along the ROUY-le-PETIT - MESNIL - ST. NICAISE Road to DRESLINCOURT. No sooner had this decision been reached than the Germans attacked under a comparatively heavy Barrage and established themselves on a Line in front of MESNIL - ST. NICAISE.

At about 5.00 P.M., Lieut. VOSBURGH and Lieut. L. BLACK with 4 Machine Guns and Crews of the Yukon Battery reported to Capt. HARKNESS. While waiting for the Situation to clear these 4 Guns were placed about 500 yds. N.-E. of the NESLE Railway Station to cover the approaches to NESLE. The 1 Gun of the Eaton Battery, under Capt. HARKNESS, was posted on the high ground about 700 yds. S.-E. of MESNIL-le-PETIT to enfilade the ground E. of the MESNIL-le-PETIT-POTTE Road and also to stop

any enemy attempt on NESLE from the direction of MESNIL - ST. NICAISE. It became evident by 8.00 P.M. that the enemy would attempt a flanking movement on NESLE from the N. either during the night or early the following morning. The Infantry Commander decided to hold a new Line along the DRESLINCOURT-NESLE Road with outposts in front of it. Capt. HARKNESS got into touch with the elements of the 183rd Infantry Brigade on the Left and helped them to organise the new Line by placing his Machine Guns in positions in front of the Railway between the NESLE Railway Station and the intersection of the NESLE-DRESLINCOURT and the MESNIL-le-PETIT-MANICOURT Roads. General SPOONER moved his Headquarters to the Southern outskirts of FAUBORG ST. LEONARD (NESLE).

"A" Battery Reports to XIX Corps; March 24th.

While the Eaton Battery was in action in the plateau W. of BETHENCOURT, early in the afternoon of March 24th, elements of the Eighth Division holding the Right Flank of the XIX Corps between BETHENCOURT and PARGNY, were being pressed back by the enemy. The 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade received an Order from FIFTH ARMY H.Q. to place at once 1 Battery at the disposal of the XIX Corps. "A" Battery, which had been held in Reserve at VILLERS-BRETONNEUX, was hurriedly dispatched forward. In accordance with Instructions received from the XIX Corps, and, later, from the Eighth Division Headquarters, Major BATTERSBY in charge of "A" Battery, reported to the Commander of the 24th Infantry Brigade (Eighth Division), Brigadier-General HAIG, at MARCHELOT. The 8 Guns of "A" Battery were mounted 2 on each of 4 Armoured Cars.

At that time the enemy was endeavouring to cross the SOMME between St. CHRIST and FALVY. At about 5.30 P.M., after a consultation with the Infantry Brigadier, Major BATTERSBY proceeded with 2 Armoured Cars, via LICOURT to CIZANCOURT. Major BATTERSBY himself was in one of the Cars and Lieut. CUTTLE, in the other. At LICOURT the 2 Cars were shelled, but by backing up and remaining under cover for about 20 minutes they were able to drive ahead although the German Artillery gunners had obtained 3 direct hits on the LICOURT-CIZANCOURT Road. On reaching CIZANCOURT the Detachment turned S. along the Road by the SOMME CANAL, towards EPENANCOURT. An Enemy Aeroplane dived down towards the Cars and fired on the Crews. The 4 Machine Guns on the 2 Armoured Cars immediately opened Fire and drove back the Aeroplane, which was seen to crash some distance away. On seeing the Armoured Cars, the enemy began to sweep the Road with Artillery and Machine Gun Fire, but none of the Cars was hit.

"A" Battery Armoured Cars in Action.

A Motor Cyclist Scout, who had been sent ahead by the O.C., "A" Battery, reported seeing about 50 Germans near the Road junction N. of EPENANCOURT. This report was corroborated by an Officer of the SHERWOOD Foresters (24th Inf. Brigade) who met this Armoured Car about 1500 Yds. S. of CIZANCOURT and informed the Machine Gunners that the enemy was preparing to attack a Position held by the Sherwood Foresters N. of the Road junction. The Road being too narrow to operate 2 Cars, it was immediately arranged with the Officer of the Sherwood Foresters, to send 1 Car forward to co-operate with our Infantry in driving the enemy back or breaking up his Attack. Major BATTERSBY went ahead with his Car and soon came into contact with a party of the enemy behind a clump of brush, S. of the Road Junction. The 2 Machine Guns on the Car opened Fire simultaneously, killing and wounding many of the party and scattering the remainder. Our Machine Gunners had gone so far forward, that the enemy used Hand-Grenades against them. Several of these Grenades exploded close to the Car, but without effect. The Car remained in this Area for about 3 Hours firing at enemy parties across the CANAL and searching with Machine Gun Fire EPENANCOURT and the fields near the Village. About 8000 Rounds were fired. This Armoured Car with Lieut. CUTTLE's Car rejoined the other 2 Cars at MARCHELOT, where "A" Battery spent the night. During the evening's encounter the Barrel Casing of 1 of the 2 Guns of Major BATTERSBY's Car was pierced, but Casualties were suffered by the Personnel of the 2 Cars in Action.

Situation on Northern Section of Fifth Army Front.

The Left Flank of the XVIII Corps had been drawn back in a South-Westerly direction from BETHENCOURT towards MESNIL-ST. NICAISE. At the same time the enemy forced back the Eighth Division Troops on the Right Flank of the XIX Corps in a North-Westerly direction from PARGNY. The Twenty-fourth Division had been thrown in by the XIX Corps near HAYENCOURT-le-PETT to fill in the Gap. On the Left Flank of the XIX Corps, behind PERONNE, the Situation was not clear. In the evening of March 23rd, the enemy had rapidly followed the withdrawal of the VII Corps to the Line

running Northward from the N. Bank of the SOMME, immediately W. of PERONNE. The VII Corps Front was held from Right to Left by the Thirty-ninth, Twenty-first and Ninth Division, CLERY-sur-SOMME was closely behind the Centre Division, which was being hardly pressed by the enemy advancing down the Valley of the TORTILLE RIVER.

"B" Battery and Borden Battery Report to VII Corps.

At 11.00 P.M., March 23rd, 1918, a few hours after the arrival of the 1st Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade at VILLERS-BRETONNEUX, "B" Battery (Captain HOLLAND, M.C.) and the Borden Battery (Capt. NICHOLSON, M.C.) were dispatched to CORBIE to operate with the Left Corps of the FIFTH ARMY. The 2 Batteries reported to VII Corps H.Q. at CORBIE, at Midnight March 23rd/24th. At 2.00 A.M. March 24th, they were instructed to proceed to Maricourt and there come under the Orders of the Twenty-first Division. Owing to the congestion of traffic on the Roads, the Batteries were greatly delayed and did not reach MARICOURT until 6.00 A.M. The Battery Commanders reported to the Twenty-first Division Headquarters and also saw the Officer Commanding the 21st Battalion, Machine Gun Corps. They received Instructions to take their Commands to CLERY-sur-SOMME and on arrival there report to Lieut.-Col. SETTLE. The 8 Guns of "B" Battery like those of "A" battery were mounted on 4 Armoured Cars, each of which carried 2 Guns and their Crews. The 8 Guns and Personnel of the Borden Battery were conveyed in Light Box Cars.

Enemy Advance N. of the Somme.

It was about 8.00 A.M. March 24th, when the Batteries reached the junction of the MARICOURT - CLERY and HEM - CLERY Roads. At that time a heavy smoke cloud was blowing from the German Lines towards our Lines, but there were few other signs of hostile activity. The Armoured Cars and Transport were stopped just below the crest of the slightly rising ground between BOIS de HEM and CLERY. Capt. HOLLAND and Capt. NICHOLSON went forward to CLERY and reported to Lieut.-Col. SETTLE, who wished to have 2 Machine Guns placed in the Village, 2 Guns, about 500 yds., left of the Village to fire in the direction of ALLAINES, and 2 Guns, on the slight rise, back of the Village to fire up the Valley of the SOMME in the direction of BIACHES. The Borden Battery, which was ready to go into Action dismounted, was ordered forward, and 2 of its Guns, under Lieut. WEST, were placed in CLERY. Enemy Shelling and Machine Gun Fire had now increased, and before the other Guns got into Action our Infantry were seen falling back over a slight Ridge on the Left of CLERY. On Instructions from Lieut.-Col. SETTLE, Capt. HOLLAND and Capt. NICHOLSON tried to rally the Infantry and with them organise for Defence a Trench running half-way up the Ridge back of the Village. The Infantry Commander, however, issued Orders to fall farther back to a Line just in front of the small Wood E. of BOIS de HEM. The hostile Artillery was now heavily shelling CLERY and the MARICOURT Road and masses of the enemy came out of the Smoke Cloud and were following our retreating Infantry. As soon as the German Troops broke through the Left, the enemy Fire on CLERY Ceased and the village was overrun.

"B" Battery and Borden Battery Co-Operation With Twenty-first Division March 24th.

The 2 Guns of the Borden Battery which were in Action on the Eastern outskirts of CLERY inflicted heavy Casualties on the Germans as their advancing Columns emerged from the Smoke Cloud and rushed forward across the Ridge N. of CLERY. A German Shell blew up 1 of these 2 Guns and either killed or wounded all its Crew. The members of the other Crew had also become Casualties but the Gun was kept in Action by Lieut. WEST and Corporal JOHNSON until the enemy Troops had entered the Village from the N. With the Fire of their Revolvers this Officer and N.C.O. kept the Germans at bay until they were able to get their Gun out of the Village. The Gun was then taken with the other 6 Guns of the Borden Battery and 8 Guns of "B" Battery to the top of the Ridge in front of the small Wood, E. of the Bois de HEM. The Machine Guns were placed in Positions on both sides of the CLERY-MARICOURT Road, along an old shallow Trench in front of a strong Belt of Wire. From these Positions the Guns covered by Fire the Valley of the SOMME, CLERY, and the ground to the Left of the Village.

The Motor Machine Gunners, who had an excellent view of all the Ground in front of them poured an intense Fire into the Ranks of the advancing enemy, breaking up their formation and inflicting heavy Casualties. But, as the Germans continued to approach the Positions, the Infantry who were in the shallow trench fell back. Capt. HOLLAND and Capt. NICHOLSON rallied them again and managed to induce a few of them to return to the Trench to co-operate with the Machine Gunners in the Defence of the Ground. There was, in all, a Garrison of about 100 men in the Trench holding a stretch of 500 yds. The determined Resistance offered by the Motor Machine Gun Batteries at this point considerably

delayed the advance of the enemy. The Germans made several unsuccessful attempts to debouch from CLERY and to outflank our Gun Positions from the N. During one of these encounters, when the Germans were approaching on the Left Flank, Corporal JOHNSON was wounded by a Sniper while endeavouring to bring into Action the Gun which he had rescued from CLERY. Capt. HOLLAND was seriously wounded while going out, under direct enemy observation and intense Machine Gun Fire, to render aid to a wounded Man in a Shell-hole on front of the Trench occupied by our Machine Gunners and the small group of Infantry. It was largely due to the great example of courage and disregard for personal safety set by this Officer, earlier in the day, that our Machine Gun Detachments with a handful of tired Infantrymen were able to frustrate the efforts at advance made by an enemy overwhelmingly superior in numbers.

Hostile Artillery Activity.

In the meantime, the Shelling on the MARICOURT-CLERY Road had become very heavy. The Motor Transport was ordered back to MARICOURT, and 3 Armoured Cars were taken a short distance back to a bend in the Road to avoid the Shelling. The 4th Armoured Car could not be moved back then, owing to its proximity to a Dump of Explosives which had been set on Fire by a German Shell and was still burning. Eventually the Fire was extinguished, and Corporal HICKS and Private RUMFORD ("B" Battery), who had gone back with the other 3 Armoured Cars, returned to start the stranded Car. But, as they approached the Car, a Shell burst beside them instantly killing Private RUMFORD and fatally wounding Corporal HICKS. In spite of the heavy Shelling, Pte. J.A. HENDERSON (Borden Battery) and a "B" Battery Man volunteered to start and drive the Armoured Car away. Capt. HOLLAND, Corporal JOHNSON, Corporal HICKS, and several other wounded Men were placed in this Car and taken to the nearest Dressing Station. Capt. HOLLAND died as he was being moved from the Car to a Stretcher.

Casualties Suffered By M.M.G. Batteries; VII Corps Front March 24th.

Owing to the heavy Artillery and Machine Gun Fire and the great activity of enemy Snipers, the Casualties suffered by "B" and "C" Batteries in the Forward Trench were extremely heavy. The Gun Positions were very exposed and the Trench was so wide and shallow that Men observing at the Guns were shot through the head. Lieut. SNYDER of "B" Battery and Lieuts. WEST and WALDRON of the Borden Battery, who had undertaken the arduous task of observing for the Guns of which they were in Command, were all shot through the head and instantly killed. The Fire of enemy Snipers and Machine Guns prevented the 2 Batteries from maintaining at the guns a proper supply of Ammunition, which was beginning to get very low. The Germans had gradually crept up close to our Gun Positions and were throwing Hand-Grenades into the Positions occupied by the Motor Machine Gunners. 3 or 4 of our Machine Guns had either been blown up or put out of Action by enemy Shells or Machine Gun Bullets. A few Infantry Reinforcements also came up and took up Positions in a fairly good trench behind a strong Belt of Wire. This Trench was about 50 yds. in rear of the Trench occupied by the Motor Machine Gunners. Earlier in the morning, our Machine Guns had been placed in front of the Wire to obtain a better Field of Fire for the guns and enable the Gunners themselves to watch all the movements of the enemy. This bold employment of Machine Guns was entirely responsible for holding up the enemy advance W. of CLERY. During the 4 or 5 hours spent in their Positions in the Shallow Trench in front of the Wire, the Gunners of the 2 Motor Machine Gun Batteries were almost constantly firing at groups of Germans and inflicting heavy losses on them.

At 2.00 P.M. March 24th, the enemy was dangerously close to our Gun Positions, the Ammunition supply was very low, and our Gun Crews had been greatly depleted in numbers. Capt. NICHOLSON, who was then the only officer in Command of the 2 Machine Gun Batteries and the Infantry, decided to withdraw to the Trench behind the Wire. A few Casualties were suffered during this withdrawal, which had to be made under enemy observation and through a narrow Gap in the Wire. In their new Positions, the Machine Gun Detachments were more or less screened from direct enemy observation and they could, therefore, manage to maintain a good supply of Ammunition from a Dump, which had been established on the MARICOURT Road, during the morning. The Infantrymen in this Line belonged to the 15th Cheshire Regiment (Thirty-fifth Division) and were commanded by Colonel COCHRANE. The enemy Shelling was still causing us many Casualties in men and Guns. At about 4.00 P.M., Capt. NICHOLSON had, in all, 4 Guns left; the others had either been blown up or had been put out of Action. With the 4 Guns there were then only 1 Officer. Capt. NICHOLSON had sent a few Messages by Dispatch Riders to the Twenty-first Divisional Headquarters and to the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade Headquarters explaining the Situation and asking for Reinforcements but received no response. At 3.00 P.M., he sent Lieut. INCH back to try and get in touch with Headquarters. In the meantime, Colonel COCHRANE had received Orders to withdraw his Men to a Line running approximately from HEM towards MAUREPAS. The

Motor Machine Gunners were to cover this withdrawal, which was to take place at 8 o'clock in the evening. At 5.00 P.M., there were only 2 Machine Guns in Action, manned by 1 Officer, 2 N.C.O.s and a few Men.

Withdrawal to HEM-MAUREPAS Line.

Shortly afterwards the enemy launched a strong Attack, breaking through on the Left Flank and advancing in large numbers from the Front. Our Infantry withdrew, but the Motor Machine Gunners remained in Action until practically surrounded. 1 of the 2 Guns was put out of Action a few minutes after the Attack commenced, and the other was fired with telling effect by Pte. FINLAYSON until the Germans were within 50 yds. of him. The few Machine Gunners, who were the last to leave the Trench, withdrew then down the Road in the direction of HEM. During this Action, Capt. NICHOLSON received a very severe wound, causing the loss of his right Arm. Battery S.M. FRECHETTE ("B" Battery) then assumed command of the 4 Men left and the few Other Ranks, who had been carrying Messages and evacuating the wounded during the day. With these Men he proceeded to MARICOURT, where the Armoured Cars and Transport were. The Men spent the night March 24th/25th at MARICOURT and Lieut. INCH went to the 1st C.M.M.G. Bde. Headquarters at VILLERS-BRETONNEUX. "B" Battery and the Borden Battery had not had a rest since the night of March 21st/22nd, when they had withdrawn from the Line on the VIMY Front.

1st C.M.M.G. Bde. in the Line on FIFTH ARMY Front; March 24th.

Throughout March 24th, the enemy continued to press hard against the FIFTH ARMY, which was holding an irregular Line with Troops exhausted by hard Fighting and incessant exertion. The 40 Machine Guns of the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade had been thrown into the Battle and were spread over a Front of about 35 Miles. By fighting an obstinate Rear-guard Action, the Motor Machine Gunners were helping the Infantry to preserve a continuous Line and to retard the German Advance until Reinforcements became available.

In conjunction with the German Attacks, enemy agents, dressed in mufti or in British Uniforms, were very active behind our Lines spreading rumours that greatly tended to demoralize both the French Civilians and our Rear Echelons. At about 12.30 P.M. March 24th, a false rumour was spread around NESLE that large bodies of German Cavalry were advancing on the City. The result was a hurried withdrawal of the Ordnance, Supply and other Columns stationed in NESLE. This added confusion to the Roads already crowded with Traffic, and made Communication very difficult. Frequently the Forward Echelons were unaware of the movements of the Rear Echelons, on whom Line Troops depended for their Supplies of Rations and Ammunition.

Move of Twentieth Division H.Q., March 24th.

Foreseeing that Rations and Supplies would be difficult to obtain in the next few days, Capt. MEURLING, M.C., the Commander of the Eaton and Yukon Batteries, whose Headquarters were in NESLE with the Twentieth Division Headquarters, loaded all the available space in his Light Box Cars with Ammunition, Rations, Gasoline and other stores that might be required. During the afternoon of March 24th, Twentieth Division H.Q. moved CARREPUITS, E. of ROYE, with Advanced Headquarters at RETHONVILLERS. Capt. MEURLING sent the Transport of his 2 Batteries to CARREPUITS and opened his own headquarters on the main Road to ROYE, immediately N. of BETHONVILLERS.

In the evening of March 24th, unconfirmed reports of an Advance by enemy Cavalry were received at Twentieth Division Headquarters. At the request of Divisional Headquarters, Capt. MEURLING manned 2 Reserve Vickers Guns with Batmen and Cooks and mounted them on the NESLE-ROYE Road, N. of BETHONVILLERS. Battery S.M. FOREST (Yukon Battery) was placed in command of the 2 Guns, but no Action developed as the report about the German Cavalry proved untrustworthy.

XVIII Corps Line, Morning March 25th.

At BUVERCHY along the LIBERMONT CANAL on the XVIII Corps Front, the German Infantry advanced in great numbers, during the night of March 24th/25th. This compelled the Right Flank of the Twentieth Division to fall back a little distance Westward. The 3 Machine Guns of the Battery, under Lieut. CAMPBELL, in Positions near BREUIL and covering the BACQENCOURT Bridge, were ordered to move to the high ground about 1200 yds. E. of CRESSY. On the Left Flank of the Twentieth Division the enemy also made heavy Attacks upon MESNIL-ST. NICAISE with the result that our Infantry withdrew a little distance to a Line facing N.-E., close to MESNIL-le-PETIT. Early in the morning of

March 25th, the Twentieth Division was holding the Line from BUVERCHY along the LIBERMONT CANAL as far N. as QUIQUERY in conjunction with the Twenty-second French Division, and from QUIQUERY to MESNIL-le-PETIT. On the Right of the Twentieth Division, the Thirtieth Division with part of the Sixty-second French Division carried on the Line Southwards as far as the bend in the CANAL. The Thirty-sixth Division, which was on the Southernmost part of the XVIII Corps Front had been relieved by the Sixty-second French Division.

M.M.G. Detachment On Left Flank of Twentieth Division; March 25th.

In spite of French Reinforcements the Situation on the XVIII Corps Front remained critical. At 5.30 A.M. March 25th, a heavy Machine Gun and Rifle Fire and Artillery Bombardment commenced to come from all quarters of the German Lines opposite the Left of the Twentieth Division. As was to be expected, our line held by worn-out Men without Officers and few N.C.O.s began to give way under pressure of the enemy, who were well supported by Machine Guns and Artillery. The G.O.C., 183rd Infantry Brigade ordered Capt. HARKNESS to proceed to the outskirts of NESLE in the vicinity of St. LEONARD to collect all stragglers and unattached Men and organise them under any officers he could find to form a local Defensive Line. General SPOONER himself undertook a similar task in the vicinity of FROIDMOND.

The object of the enemy Attack in this Area was to keep open and enlarge the Gap between the XVIII and XIX Corps. During this Attack the 4 Yukon Battery Machine Guns, under Lieuts. VOSBURGH and BLACK, and the 1 Eaton Battery Gun under Battery S.M. HERSEY, D.C.M., did excellent work inflicting Casualties on the enemy and covering the withdrawal of our Infantry. 2 of the Yukon Battery Guns, under Lieut. L.M. BLACK, were dug in the Slot Trenches on a flat to the left of NESLE. The Gunners withheld their Fire until the enemy was within a Range of 500 yds. They then opened Fire with good effect; many Germans fell and their line broke as a result of our steady and continuous Machine Gun Fire. A "Whiz-bang" Battery was brought into Action by the enemy against our Gun Crews. The Infantry had withdrawn and our Machine Gun Positions were outflanked by enemy Snipers and Light Machine Gunners. The Motor Machine Gunners then withdrew their Guns to the Railway Line. Several Casualties from enemy Enfilade Rifle and Machine Gun Fire were suffered during this withdrawal. Sgt. BLAIKIE, D.C.M., M.M., who handled 1 of Lieut. BLACK's Guns with great courage, was killed. The Eaton Battery Gun and 1 of the 2 Yukon Battery Guns, under Lieut. VOSBURG, were damaged beyond repair.

Lieut. BLACK enlisted the services of a number of Infantrymen belonging to an Argyle and Sutherland Battalion to help him man his Machine Guns. The Highlanders refilled Belts while Lieut. BLACK and his 4 Men kept the Guns in Action. Eventually, this small Group retired through NESLE at 8.30 A.M. and joined Capt. HARKNESS on the NESLE-RETHONVILLERS Road about 600 yds. S.-W. of St. LEONARD. With the help of these 2 Machine Guns and the Infantry which Capt. HARKNESS had collected, a line was formed between NESLE and HERLY overlooking the RIVER d'IGNON. This line was extended to the Right along the River as far as LANGUEVOISIN. 4 other Machine Guns all out of Action belonging to a British Unit were found S. of NESLE. Capt. HARKNESS' account of the Action in the morning of March 25th is in part as follows:-

"We managed to make 2 good Guns out of the 4 and placed them in the line under Lieut. BLACK to assist the Infantry. Lieut. VOSBURGH and his Detachment had not reported; they evidently withdrew through MANICOURT and later reported to Capt. MEURLING in ROYE. He had suffered 4 Casualties out of 8 Gunners. The 1 Eaton battery Gun was badly damaged in the German Attack delivered in the early morning. Battery S.M. HERSEY, D.C.M., was reported "Missing, believed killed" and 2 Other Ranks, wounded; Corporal McKENNA, who was with this Gun, returned badly wounded bringing with him the Lock of the Gun. Lieut. BLACK reported 6 casualties out of the 10 Other Ranks in Action under him.

"With the exception of some scattered shelling, the situation remained comparatively quiet until Noon. Lieut. BLACK carried out harassing fire on the approaches to NESLE. The 2 repaired Guns went out of Action."

During the morning of March 25th, NESLE was reported to have fallen and at 12.45 P.M. enemy Troops had forced the LIBERMONT CANAL at BREUIL. The enemy's Turning Movement forced back the left of the Twentieth Division from the N. of NESLE and QUIQUERY to a line on the high ground 1000 yds. W. of NESLE. Meanwhile Troops of the 133rd French Division had moved up in Support to the Twentieth Division and were digging themselves in on the line BILLANCOURT-HERLY. At 12.00 Noon, our Infantry withdrew to this Line and Lieut. BLACK's 2 Machine Guns were placed on the left of

the NESLE-ROYE Road, half-way between NESLE and RETHONVILLERS. Two French Machine Guns were in Positions across the Road from Lieut. BLACK's Detachment. At the same time, the 183rd Infantry Brigade was amalgamated with the 59th Infantry Brigade of the Twentieth Division and the command passed to Brigadier-General HISLOP of the latter Brigade. Capt. HARKNESS' Detachment also came under the Orders of the G.O.C., 59th Inf. Brigade.

M.M.G. Detachment on Right Flank of Twentieth Division; March 25th.

Early in the afternoon, the Germans were observed massing on the W. side of BREUIL and at the same time his Advanced Parties were seen moving Westward from the Village. The Yukon Battery Guns, in Positions on the high ground E. of CRESSY, concentrated their Fire on them at a Range of 2000 yds. killing and wounding many of them and breaking up their Formation. The Guns remained in Action throughout the afternoon covering the Infantry, who were withdrawing on both Flanks. Late in the afternoon, to avoid being cut off by the enemy advancing Westward from the direction of BREUIL and MOYENCOURT and from NESLE toward ROYE, Lieut. CAMPBELL withdrew his Guns from the Position E. of CRESSY. This Detachment fell back to ROYE with the Infantry, on the night of March 25th/26th, but not without considerable Fighting.

At about 1.00 P.M., March 25th, the enemy, employing the same Tactics as before, gradually pressed back our BILLANCOURT-HERLY Line at certain selected points and outflanked our Machine Gun Positions. But the Motor Machine Gunners, co-operating with the British and French Troops throughout the day, kept their Guns in Action until completely outflanked, thus delaying the enemy and easing the pressure upon our tired and weak Infantry. The enemy occupied HERLY and LANGUEVOISIN and advanced rapidly towards CRESSY; but his repeated efforts during the afternoon to make progress along the NESLE-ROYE Road were unsuccessful.

Ammunition & Rations.

The Headquarters of the 59th Infantry Brigade were established about 500 yds. S.-W. of BILLANCOURT. Capt. HARKNESS, who was in close touch with Brigade Headquarters, arranged for a supply of Rations and Ammunition for his Gun Crews and for the entire 59th Brigade, which was a little over 500 Rifles strong (including the 183rd Brigade). A Napier Box Car was sent to an Ammunition Dump with Orders to take forward 40,000 Rounds of S.A.A. Two trips were necessary to carry this amount. The Car Driver, Pte. MEDVASKES, took the first 20,000 Rounds forward and unloaded it at a pre-arranged spot, from which the Gunners were to replenish the Ammunition Supply at the Guns. When Pte. MEDVASKES returned with his second load he found that his first load was already in the hands of the Germans. Under Machine Gun and Rifle Fire, he turned his Car around and reported back safely to his Group Headquarters. This incident is a good illustration of the confusion caused by the rapid changes in the Situation. After dark, Capt. MEURLING sent forward another Car full of Rations. Pte. MOWAT, the Driver, drove his Car at full speed to the Outpost Line, where it was quickly unloaded by some of the Crews of the Yukon Battery Guns. The Motor Machine Gunners divided their Rations with the Infantrymen, who had not had regular food and uninterrupted rest for 3 days. In fighting with the enemy, in organizing Defensive Positions, in withdrawing and in many other ways, the Infantry invariably rallied around the Canadian Motor Machine Gun Detachments.

Capt. MEURLING withdraws his Group from the Line.

During the afternoon of March 25th, Capt. MEURLING sent forward Battery S.M. FOREST in command of 2 Vickers Guns manned by Cooks and Batmen. Capt. HARKNESS ordered this Detachment to join Lieut. BLACK, who in the meantime had had 1 of his 2 Guns put out of Action. The Germans continued their Advance from HERLY and established themselves on the Left of RETHONVILLERS. Lieut. BLACK moved his Guns to Positions 500 yds. S.-W. of RETHONVILLERS to protect the Left Flank of our Line. These Positions were occupied until Midnight March 25th/26th, when Capt. HARKNESS received Orders from the 59th Infantry Brigade to report to Capt. MEURLING in ROYE. After the French had taken over the Line and our Infantry had withdrawn, our Machine Gunners moved back arriving to the E. of ROYE at 3.30 A.M. March 26th. From here Capt. MEURLING withdrew his Group to BOUCHOIR and at 7.00 A.M. he moved again to the vicinity of le QUESNEL where the Headquarters of the Twentieth Division had been established.

Twenty-fourth Division Counter-attack; March 25th.

When the enemy attacked the Positions of the 183rd Infantry Brigade at MESNIL-ST. NICAISE, on the night of March 24th/25th, he also advanced rapidly Westward. By the morning of March 25th the Right

Flank of the Eighth Division (XIX Corps) had been bent back from the SOMME towards LICOURT. The Situation on the Front between the Right Flank of the Eighth Division and NESLE was critical. At 7.00 A.M., the Twenty-fourth Division launched a Counter-attack from their Positions near HYENCOURT-le-PETIT in the direction of DRESLINCOURT. The Eaton Battery, under Lieut. G.A. MARSHALL, supported the 73rd Infantry Brigade (Twenty-fourth Division) in the Counter-attack with Direct and Overhead Fire. Of this Action Lieut. MARSHALL writes as follows:-

"I saw the 73rd Brigade Commander, whose Headquarters were at PUZEAUX. We were to assist in the attack as much as possible with our 7 Machine Guns, but we were to maintain strong positions to cover a possible withdrawal. Knowing the exhausting condition of his troops, this withdrawal seemed almost a certainty. They had been fighting since the morning of March 21st and the whole Brigade was not now as strong as one Battalion. None of our Machine Guns moved forward; 5, were in excellent Positions along the FONCHETTE-OMIECOURT Road and 2, about 400 yds. N.-E. of HYENCOURT-le-PETIT. From all the Positions we had a splendid view of the ground over which our Infantry advanced. We fired at 3 different ranges - 2,000, 2500 and 3000 yds. The Fire was lifted as our troops advanced. The Infantry progresses about half-way between BERSAUCOURT and DRESLINCOURT, when we saw them coming back in places. This grew rapidly until we could see that the whole line was withdrawing. We then repeated our firing programme backwards endeavouring to cover their retirement in accordance with the Orders of the G.O.C. 73rd Infantry Brigade. We had ample bulk S.A.A. but our belts were so few that the No. 2 Gunners had to fill the expended end of the belt as it went through the Gun."

The 73rd Brigade, which was on the Left of the Attack, made a little headway, but the Troops on the Right, as they went up for the Attack, were themselves heavily attacked near CURCHY and retired to their original Positions. After this withdrawal, the 2 Guns N.-E. of HYENCOURT-le-PETIT were moved back to Positions on the Right of the other 5 Guns along the FONCHETTE-OMIECOURT Road. The Infantry withdrew again and Captain MARSHALL conformed to this movement by placing his Machine Guns in Positions along the Railway Line N. of the Wood E. of PUZEAUX. In the afternoon the Infantry were ordered to withdraw farther back and take up the HATTENCOURT-CHAULNES Line.

Eaton Battery Withdrawn from the Line.

The Eaton Battery had suffered several Casualties from Shell Fire and had only 15 Other Ranks left: 4 of these were British Machine Gunners and 2 others were Infantrymen. The Crews had been reduced to fighting with 1 or 2 Men per Gun. The Battery had been closely engaged with the enemy since the morning of the previous day and the Men had had no rest since the morning of March 22nd. The Guns, Equipment and Ammunition had to be carried across country by greatly depleted Crews; in some cases this was done with only a few hundred yards between them and the hard-pressing enemy. At Noon, March 25th, the Battery had practically no Ammunition left and no Transport or Personnel to send for a fresh Supply of S.A.A. The Men were tired and without Rations. Lieut. MARSHALL therefore, withdrew his Detachment out of the Line to reorganize and refit. The Crews marched back through CHAULNES to BAYONVILLERS, where they arrived at about Midnight March 25th/26th. After securing a little food and Billets in BAYONVILLERS for his Men, Lieut. MARSHALL proceeded to VILLERS-BRETONNEUX to get in touch with the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade Headquarters.

On arrival at VILLERS-BRETONNEUX he found out that the Brigade H.Q. had moved during the evening, but no one was able to tell him where they had gone. He finally got in touch with the Brigade H.Q. at HEBECOURT, on the morning of March 25th, and in accordance with orders received from Lieut.-Col. WALKER, the Eaton Battery was moved that day from BAYONVILLERS to HEBECOURT for re-organisation and re-equipment.

"A" Battery Armoured Cars on Eighth Division Front, March 25th.

On the night of March 24th/25th and the following day, the main effort of the enemy opposite the central part of the FIFTH ARMY Front was directed, against the Right Flank of the Eighth Division between EPENANCOURT and St. CHRIST. At about 4.00 A.M. March 25th, "A" Battery (Major BATTERSBY), 1st C.M.M.G.B., which was co-operating with the 24th Infantry Brigade (Eighth Division), left MARCHELPOT for CIZANCOURT via LICOURT.⁸³ Lieut. W.H. SMITH and Lieut. CUTTLE in charge of 2 Armoured Cars of "A" Battery stopped near a Factory, about half-way between

⁸³ See Page 155.

LICOURT and GIZANCOURT. They were to be in readiness to support a Counter-attack to be delivered by our Infantry at 9.15 A.M. Major BATTERSBY and Lieut. ADAMS with the other 2 Cars went to CIZANCOURT and the proceeded down the Road toward EPENANCOURT. A short time after their arrival at the Factory, the Armoured Cars under Lieuts. SMITH and CUTTLE were subjected to heavy enemy Artillery Fire. To avoid the Shelling the Cars were moved to a Sunken Road half-way between the Factory and CIZANCOURT. From this Position, Lieut. CUTTLE moved with his Car to the outskirts of CIZANCOURT and took up a new Position there.

At 8.50 A.M., the enemy Infantry attacked under cover of an intense Shrapnel, High Explosive and Machine Gun Barrage. Our Infantry began to fall back. The 2 Guns of Lieut. SMITH's Car were placed on the high Bank of the Sunken Road, and from these Positions the Gunners fired very effectively and delayed the Germans for a short time. The other 3 Cars were slowly backing up the Roads and covering with the Fire of their 6 Machine Guns the retirement of our Troops. When Lieut. SMITH was forced to withdraw, owing to the advanced Positions held by the enemy on both Flanks, he found out that by an outflanking movement the Germans had entered MARCHELPOT. He was, therefore, compelled to retire by way of LICOURT and OMIECOURT. Lieut. CUTTLE was wounded while moving back from CIZANCOURT. While the 2 Armoured Cars with Major BATTERSBY were withdrawing through LICOURT, the Germans were entering the Village from the S. Both Crews put up a splendid Fight firing on the Germans at very close range until Major BATTERSBY together with the Driver and 2 Gun Crews were killed. The other Armoured Car, under Lieut. ADAMS, made an effort to rescue Major BATTERSBY's Car, but owing to a very intense enemy Fire, the attempt proved fruitless and the Car was left in the hands of the enemy. During this Action Lieut. ADAMS was severely wounded. His Car and the Car which Lieut. CUTTLE had commanded withdrew to OMIECOURT. At the request of an Infantry Brigadier General, 1 of these Cars was employed for a short time in carrying Ammunition to the Troops in the Front Line. The 3 remaining Armoured Cars were then withdrawn by Lieut. W.H. SMITH to the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade H.Q. at VILLERS-BRETONNEUX to replenish the Ammunition supply and reorganize the Gun Crews.

XIX and VII Corps Front March 25th.

In the afternoon of March 25th, all of the Divisions in the XIX Corps, were ordered to withdraw to the Line HATTENCOURT-CHAULNES-ABLAINOURT-ESTREES-ASSEVILLERS-HERBEOURT-FRISE. During the 25th, command of the XVIII Corps passed from the FIFTH ARMY to the THIRD FRENCH ARMY. The FIFTH ARMY now commanded only the XIX Corps, which was holding the Front from HATTENCOURT N. to the SOMME. On the same day, all Troops of the VII Corps N. of the SOMME were transferred to the V Corps and became part of the THIRD ARMY (British). The enemy maintained a great pressure against the V Corps making several Attacks, during the afternoon of March 25th, in the vicinity of GUINCHY and THONES WOOD, places which had become famous since the SOMME BATTLE of 1916. During the night 25th/26th, the Line of Defence was taken back to a new Position between BRAY-sur-SOMME and ALBERT.

"B" Battery and Borden Batteries Withdrawn from Line.

The few Men of "B" Battery and the Borden Battery, who spent the night 24th/25th in MARICOURT, were withdrawn to BRAY on the morning of the 25th. Lieut. INCH organized an 8-Gun Battery with this Personnel and a few Reinforcements Lieut.-Col. WALKER had sent up under Lieut. GEEEN and Lieut. LYNCH. This Composite Battery consisting of 3 Officers and 40 or 50 Other Ranks, remained in Reserve at BRAY throughout the day. At 5.00 A.M. March 26th, the Armoured Cars of "B" Battery, under Lieuts. GREEN and LYNCH, went into Action and operated during the day along the Road leading N. from BRAY and also between BRAY and MORLANCOURT. The Cars were of great assistance to the Infantry in protecting their Flanks as they fell back from the BRAY-ALBERT Line. Many good Targets were obtained by the Machine Gunners in the Cars and a considerable number of Casualties were inflicted on the enemy. After dark, Lieuts. GREEN and LYNCH withdrew from the Line and joined Lieut. INCH, who had moved to CORBIE in the morning with the Transport of the Borden Battery and the Personnel of the Composite Battery not in Action with the Armoured Cars. On the morning of March 27th this Detachment of the 1st C.M.M.G., Brigade was withdrawn to the Brigade H.Q. at HEBECOURT to reorganize.

Carey's Force.

The British Line N. of the SOMME, on the morning of the 26th, ran generally from BRAY to ALBERT. S. of the SOMME the Left Flank of the FIFTH ARMY or XIX Corps, resting on the Left Bank of the

SOMME, near FRISE, remained uncovered and was about 5 miles E. of the Right Flank of the THIRD ARMY. The British Troops on the XIX and XVIII Corps Fronts were greatly exhausted. There were no Reserves behind them. A mixed Force, consisting of Details, Stragglers, Personnel of Army Schools, Canadian and American Engineers, etc., which had been organized by General GRANT, the Chief Engineer of the FIFTH ARMY, was placed in Positions along the Line MEZIERES-MARCELCAVE-HAMEL. On the 26th, General GRANT handed over to General CAREY the command of this mixed Force, which later became widely known as Carey's Forces. Lieut.-Col. WALKER (O.C., 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade), on the same day, organized a 10-Gun Machine Gun Battery to support Carey's Force, which totaled 2200 All Ranks and was holding the last organized Line of Defence before AMIENS. These 10 Guns together with all the other necessary Equipment were drawn from Carey's Force Stores at VILLERS-BRETONNEUX, and the Battery Personnel consisted of 4 Officers and 35 Other Ranks Reinforcements, who had just arrived from the Cdn. M.G. Corps Reinforcement Depot at DIVION. Lieut. T.A. SMITH was placed in command of the whole Battery, with Lieuts. SAMUELS and H. SMITH commanding 4 Guns each, and Lieut. MILLWARD, 2 Guns. On the evening of March 26th, these Guns were placed in Positions in AUBERCOURT, MARCELCAVE and HAMEL.

The Line held by Carey's Force was the only organized Line of Resistance behind the FIFTH ARMY Front.

"Except for General Carey's Force there were no reinforcements of any kind behind the Divisions which had been fighting for the most part continuously since the opening of the battle. In consideration of this fact and the thinness of our Fighting Line, the Fifth Army Commander did not deem it practicable for our Troops to attempt to maintain the HATTENCOURT-FRISE Positions if seriously attacked. Accordingly, orders had been given on the night of the 25th March that in the event of the enemy continuing his Assaults in strength, divisions should fall back, fighting rearguard Actions to the approximate Line LE QUESNOY-ROSIERES-PROYART. This Line was intended to link up with the right of the Third Army at BRAY."⁸⁴

Withdrawal From ROYE.

On the morning of March 26th, the enemy, who had entered ROYE during the night, recommenced his Attacks from the direction of LIANCOURT with the object of breaking them much coveted ROYE-AMIENS Road. The Twentieth Division withdrew that morning to the le QUESNEL Area, with Divisional Headquarters established in the Village itself. 2 of its Brigades, the 59th and 60th, took up a Line just E. of le QUESNEL and the 61st Brigade concentrated at BEAUFORT where it was in touch with elements of the Twenty-fourth Division (XIX Corps). The Thirtieth Division (XVIII Corps) was holding the Village of BOUHOIR, FOLIES and ROUVROY. Capt. MEURLING, with the remnants of the Eaton and Yukon M.M.G. Batteries as well as the Transport of the 2 Batteries, was located on the Southern outskirts of le QUESNEL.

Situation XVIII Corps Front: Morning March 26th.

The Situation W. and N.-W. of ROYE was very critical. The French Twenty-second and Sixty-second Divisions were withdrawing in a South-Westerly direction towards the valley of the AVRE RIVER and S. of it. The British Troops, after fighting a strong rearguard Action, had managed to extricate themselves from a critical Situation and were marching in a North-Westerly direction. A Gap had thus been left between the British and French. The enemy was very active and threatened to drive in a wedge between the 2 Armies. On the Right of the Main Road, ANDECHY was in the hands of the enemy, whose troops were close to ERCHES. On the N. side of the Road the Germans were taking advantage of a Gap S. of ROSIERES and were pushing forward between MEHARICOURT and FRESNOY-les-ROYE. The Twentieth and Thirtieth Divisions, which were supposed to have been relieved by the French the night before, found themselves again in the thick of a Battle. Elements of the Thirty-sixth Division (XVIII Corps) also were facing the enemy S. of the ROYE Road. The Motor Machine Gunners in this Area were thrown hurriedly into the Fight. They greatly helped to check the German Advance in spite of the heavy Casualties they had suffered in Men and Guns during the afternoon and evening of the previous day in the withdrawals from NESLE, RETHONVILLERS and CARPEPUTS to ROYE.

⁸⁴ Dispatch from Field-Marshal SIR DOUGLAS HAIG, K.T., C.I.B., G.C.V.O., covering the period from December 8th, 1917, to April 30th, 1918.

Eaton and Yukon Batteries in Action on XVIII Corps Front March 26th.

At 11.00 A.M. March 26th., Capt. MEURLING was told by the G.O.C. Twentieth Division, that his tired and depleted Machine Gun Crews were to be kept out of the Line for 24 hours. But 20 minutes afterwards, circumstances forced the Divisional Commander to make immediate use of the limited Machine Gun Resources at his disposal. He, therefore, sent for Capt. MEURLING and told him that as the enemy had again broken through and taken FOUQUESCOURT, it was imperative that his Machine Guns be placed in the Line at once. Instead of 24 hours, the remnants of the Eaton and Yukon Batteries had less than 24 minutes rest. The Detachment had only 7 Guns in working order. These Guns had been salvaged by Capt. MEURLING on the way back from there NESLE-ROYE Front to le QUESNEL. All the original Guns of these 2 Batteries, with the exception of those commanded by Lieut. MARSHALL, had been destroyed, or put out of Action during the Operations of the 2 previous days. As already narrated, Lieut. MARSHALL's Guns had operated independently and were now withdrawn. The 7 Guns collected by Capt. MEURLING were mounted on Light Auxiliary Tripods as the Mark IV Tripod proved too heavy for use in a Rearguard Action, where the Line was moving constantly and rapidly. Owing to the small number of Men available, the Gun Crews consisted of 2 Men each.

By 12.30 P.M. March 26th, the 7 Machine Guns were in forward Positions: 4, under Lieut. VOSBURGH, in front of ROUVROY, and 3, under Lieut. CAMPBELL, in front of WARVILLERS. Capt. HARKNESS, M.C., was in command of the entire Detachment. The Defence of ROUVROY was in charge of a Captain of the Royal Engineers, who had under him a Company of Men belonging to the Royal Engineers, Labours Battalions, Entrenching Battalions, Men returning from leave or hospital, stragglers, etc. This mixed Company held a Line in front of ROUVROY along the PARVILLERS-VRELY Road. During the afternoon, the enemy made several unsuccessful attempts to advance N.-W. and W. from PARVILLERS and FOUQUESCOURT, respectively. Excellent work was done by the Motor Machine Gunners in this Area, where they not only inflicted heavy losses upon the enemy but held him in check for the remainder of the day while our exhausted Infantry were taking up new Dispositions. At about 5.30 P.M., Capt. HARKNESS, assisted by the Officer of the Royal Engineers, reorganized the Defence of ROUVROY. Outposts were established in front of the PARVILLERS-VRELY Road, and S.-E. and S. of ROUVROY. A system of Patrols and Reliefs was also arranged. Comparative calm prevailed during the night March 26th/27th. Capt. MEURLING, M.C., organized an independent Patrol, under Battery Sgt.-Major FOREST, to proceed along the ROUVROY-PARVILLERS Road to obtain information as to the enemy's movements. This Patrol made 2 trips from ROUVROY during the night and reported that large enemy working parties were seen digging a line between and W. of PARVILLERS and FOUQUESCOURT and that Tractors moving along the Roads were heard. The Germans were evidently bringing up their Heavy Artillery. This information was at once transmitted to the Twentieth Division Headquarters.

During the night Capt. MEURLING managed to collect 5 more Vickers Guns with Auxiliary Tripods and 1 Lewis Gun with 12 Ammunition Drums. 5 new Crews of 2 Men each were organized from the remnants of the Eaton and Yukon Batteries still at le QUESNEL. 1 Gun was sent to reinforce Capt. HARKNESS's Detachment at WARVILLERS and, the following morning, the other 4 Guns were placed in Positions in front of HANGEST, S. of the ROYE Road, under Lieut. VOSBURGH, who had been relieved during the night by Lieut. CAMPBELL. The Lewis Gun, under Sgt. HENEY and 1 Other Rank, was placed in front of ROUVROY at the intersection of the FOUQUESCOURT-ROUVROY and PARVILLERS-VRELY Roads. At dawn and just before it got light, a German Staff Car was driven along the FOUQUESCOURT-ROUVROY Road towards our lines by a Driver who had apparently lost his way. When the Car came within 75 yds. of our Positions, Sgt. Henry opened Fire on it with his Lewis Gun, badly wounding or killing the occupants of the Car and damaging the engine. Lieut. CAMPBELL and 2 Men then tried to reach the Car but were driven off by heavy Rifle and Machine Gun Fire from the direction of FOUQUESCOURT.

General FOCH Appointed to Command Allied Forces.

"On this day, the 26th March, the Governments of France and Great Britain decided to place the supreme control of the operations of the French and British Forces in France and Belgium in the hands of General Foch, who accordingly assumed control."⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Dispatch from Field-Marshal SIR DOUGLAS HAIG, K.T., G.I.B., G.C.V.O., covering the period from December 8th, 1917, to April 30th, 1918.

M.M.G. Detachment With Twentieth Division Heavily Engaged March 27th.

Early in the morning of March 27th, the enemy Artillery became very active and his Troops attacked unsuccessfully in the direction of ROUVROY. Another Attack during the morning was repulsed with severe losses to the German Infantry. In addition to the observed good effect of their well-directed Fire, the presence of the 8 Motor Machine Gun Crews in front of ROUVROY and WARVILLERS was a great moral support to our weak Infantry Detachments holding the 2 Villages. S. of the ROYE Road the Situation was full of menace. Very early in the morning German Cavalry, working through the Woods along the AVRE RIVER pushed through the Outposts of the Thirty-sixth Division and advances against GUERBIGNY. At 10.40 A.M., ERMES was in the hands of the enemy, and BOUCHOIR was lost at 12.30 P.M. ARVILLERS and FOLIES were still held by us.

As the enemy pressure increased and as our Infantry withdrew, Lieut. CAMPBELL moved his Guns back from ROUVROY to WARVILLERS. The Ammunition supply being very low, Capt. HARKNESS went back to ROUVROY on his Motor Cycle to get a few Ammunition Belt Boxes which had been left in the Village. He strapped 2 Belt Boxes to the rear of the Motor Cycle and 2 other Boxes to the handle-bars. While riding between ROUVROY and WARVILLERS, however, a Shell landed within 5 feet of him blowing both Motor Cycle and rider into the air. After regaining consciousness, Capt. HARKNESS walked on to WARVILLERS and then to le QUESNEL, where he reported the condition of his Gun Crews to Capt. MEURLING.

Early in the afternoon, the enemy made another effort against ROUVROY and finally succeeded in entering the Village. The 4 Guns under Lieut. CAMPBELL had been subjected to shelling and Machine Gun Fire; 5 out of his original 8 Men had become Casualties. The other 4 Guns in front of WARVILLERS had also been hotly engaged all day and the Crews had suffered a few Casualties. Twice during the afternoon the Advance of the enemy from ROUVROY towards WARVILLERS was brought to a standstill by the Fire of the 8 Guns, under Capt. HARKNESS, who had only 10 Men left to man the same number of Guns that were usually kept in Action by 32 Men.

Capt. MEURLING sent forward to Lieut. CAMPBELL at WARVILLERS all the Drivers and Cooks he could spare, together with a few Infantry Stragglers he had collected. A supply of Ammunition was also sent up. These Reinforcements reached WARVILLERS just in time to help a small force of Infantry, who had been rallied by Lieut. CAMPBELL, to repel another German Attack and eventually check the enemy Advance at this point. Capt. HARKNESS, who acted with conspicuous gallantry since his Battery first went into Action on March 24th, and who was called "CANADA" by all the Infantrymen with whom he had co-operated, was evacuated to hospital.

Earlier in the afternoon, the 4 Machine Guns, under Lieut. VOSBURGH, in front of RANGEST, obtained an exceptionally good target. German Cavalry tried to advance from the S.-E. towards WARVILLERS and HANGEST, but the Fire of these Guns definitely checked their progress. Later in the afternoon, the Germans were pressing on in great numbers near BOUCHOIR. Lieut. BLACK with 4 Guns and Crews from WARVILLERS were at once dispatched to take up a Position at the Cross-roads about 1 mile W. of BOUCHOIR with Orders to hold up the enemy at all costs. This Detachment was rushed forward by Car through BEAUFORT and le QUESNEL and was in position within half an hour from the time it left WARVILLERS. The Guns had splendid Targets for about an hour and a half and succeeded in checking the enemy. The G.O.C. Twentieth Division specially thanked this Detachment for their excellent work.

Remnants of Eaton and Yukon Batteries Relieved; Morning March 28th.

With nightfall enemy activity decreased considerably and during the night March 27th/28th, the French 133rd Division relieved the Twentieth Division. The Divisional Orders for this Relief contained the following reference to Capt. MEURLING's Group.

"Canadian M.G. Brigade will be the last to be withdrawn from the Line and will assemble and move to HEBECOURT under special instructions already issued."⁸⁶

The Relief was completed on the morning of March 28th and in accordance with Instructions the Motor Machine Gunners came out of the Line after all the elements of the Twentieth Division had been relieved. Out of the 12 Vickers Gun Crews on the previous day and night, only 8 Vickers Guns were taken out. The remainder of the Guns (without crews) were left in WARVILLERS at the request of Brigadier-General MORGAN, Commanding the 72nd Infantry Brigade, Twenty-fourth Division. At about 9.30

⁸⁶ Twentieth Division G.B. 803, dated March 28th 1918.

A.M. March 28th., the remnants of the Eaton and Yukon Batteries moved to HABECOURT, the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade Headquarters. All the Officers, N.C.O.s and Men needed a well earned rest. In his report on these Operations Capt. MEURLING writes:-

"Everybody at once went to bed, as no man had had any rest since the morning of the 22nd - with the exception of two hours on the morning of the 24th and two hours on the morning of the 26th."

Situation on Left Flank of XIX Corps; Morning March 27th.

During the night March 26th/27th, the Line on the XIX Corps Front ran roughly in front of BOUCHOIR, ROUVROY, ROSIERES, VAUVILLERS and PROYART. N. of the SOMME the Right of the THIRD ARMY withdrew to the Line SAILLY-le-SEC-MERICOURT l'ABBE. The enemy gained possession of ALBERT and obtained a footing in BOIS d'AVELUY. In view of the dangerous Situation created along the SOMME by the withdrawal of THIRD ARMY Troops from BRAY Westwards, the XIX Corps ordered a Detachment of 300 men under Lieut.-Col. MORNE, at BOIS de VAIRE, and another Detachment of 1 Officer, 50 men and 6 Lewis Guns, at MARCELCAVE (both from Carey's Force) together with an Armoured Car Battery of the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade to report to the G.O.C. Sixteenth Division at HAMEL in order to guard the Crossings over the SOMME at CRISY and thus prevent the enemy from outflanking the Left of the XIX Corps Front at PROYART.

"A" Battery in Action on Exposed Flank of XIX Corps; March 27th.

"A" Battery of the 1st C.M.M.G. Bde., which had been attached to the XIX Corps on March 25th and had then operated with the Eighth Division, was now detailed by Lieut.-Col. WALKER (O.C., 1st C.M.M.G. Bde.) to report to the Sixteenth Division. Lieut. W.H. SMITH was placed in command of the Battery, which consisted of the 3 remaining Armoured Cars of "A" Battery.⁸⁷ Lieuts. R.M. THOMSON and TRENWITH⁸⁸ were each in charge of 1 Armoured Car. Then about 4.00 A.M. March 27th, Lieut.-Col. HORNE, with the greater portion of his Force, and Lieut. W.H. SMITH, with "A" Battery, arrived at HAMEL.

The Motor Machine Gunners received Orders to take their Guns forward to the outskirts of CERISY and guard the 2 undestroyed Bridges over the SOMME at the Village. 4 Guns, under Lieuts. W.H. SMITH and TRENWITH, were placed in Position close to the Northern outskirts of the Village to cover the Left Brigade, and 2 Guns, under Lieut. R.M. THOMSON, were posted close to the Southern outskirts to cover the Right Bridge. After the Guns and Ammunition had been unloaded and taken to their Positions, the Cars were withdrawn a little distance under cover. At about 10.00 A.M., the enemy, who was rapidly following the withdrawal of the Right Flank of the THIRD ARMY, appeared to be massing his Troops N. and N.-W. of CHIPILLY preparatory to an attempt to force a Crossing Southwards over the CANAL. At that time, the 4 Machine Gun Crews, under Lieut. W.H. SMITH, noticed a large Group of the enemy on the opposite (Right) Bank of the CANAL. From their Formation, they were judged to be Machine Gun Sections. The Germans were given time to mount their Guns and then our Machine Gunners opened an intense Fire on them at a Range of 12000 yds. killing and wounding many of them and scattering the remainder. The Action of Lieut. SMITH's 4 Guns at this point is an excellent illustration of the demoralizing effect of the Fire of Machine Guns, one of the Chief Characteristics of which is Surprise. "A" Battery Guns remained in Action in CERISY for about 3 hours. During this time 15000 Rounds were fired.

Lieut. W.M. SMITH was then ordered to move his Battery from CERISY to MORCOURT, "but owing to the condition of the roads and the tactical features of the ground"⁸⁹ he was unable to take his Guns into Action. The Battery, therefore, went back to VILLERS-BRETONNEUX (XIX Corps H.Q.) for further Instructions, picking up on the way a number of wounded Men and leaving them at Dressing Stations. From VILLERS-BRETONNEUX, Lieut. R.M. THOMSON's Armoured Car returned to HEBECOURT, 1st C.M.M.G. Bde. Headquarters, for repairs. Lieut. W.H. SMITH, O.C., "A" Battery, writes as follows of the Action of his 2 remaining Armoured Cars during the afternoon and evening of the same day, March 27th:-

⁸⁷ 1 had been lost at LICOURT. See Page 172.

⁸⁸ These 2 Officers came with other Reinforcements from DIVION on the morning of March 26th.

⁸⁹ Lieut. W.H. SMITH's Report on the Action of "A" Battery, on March 27th and 28th.

"Our next orders were to proceed to HAMEL, as the enemy had then crossed the bridges in the vicinity of CERISY. This was at 4.00 P.M. At 5.00 P.M. we met the enemy in large numbers between CERISY and HAMEL, and, operating two cars, with four Machine Guns at a range of about 600 yds. had some very good shooting. While there I noticed a man lying in No Man's Land, waving his hand. I asked for volunteers to go and see who it was. Sgt. VICKERS and Pte. VANDYKE, under heavy M.G. fire, went out and found it was an Imperial Tommy wearing the Mons Ribbon, who had been lying out there for four hours with a shattered leg. They brought him up on to the road and put him on a side-car and sent him back to the dressing-station.

"After expending my Ammunition I went into HAMEL and reloaded by belts, while Lieut. TRENWITH remained and kept up the fire on the enemy. I returned and relieved him, and he did the same. Continuing in this way we must have caused hundreds of casualties. There was very little fire at this time."⁹⁰

The Gunners on the 2 Armoured Cars continued to check the enemy advance in front of HAMEL until darkness, when they withdrew to VILLERS-BRETONNEUX for the night. The British Line S. of the SOMME on night March 27th/28th ran generally W. of BOUCHOIR, E. of WARVILLERS, VRELY, ROSIERES, thence N.-W. to vicinity of HARBONNIERES, W. of WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT, and close to HAMEL.

"B" Battery Armoured Cars Report to XIX Corps; Evening March 27th.

At about 8.30 P.M. March 27th, "B" Battery (8 Machine Guns, mounted on 4 Armoured Cars), 1st C.M.M.G. Bde., under Capt. R.C. CLARK, was sent from HEBECOURT to VILLERS-BRETONNEUX to report to the XIX Corps. Capt. CLARK's Instructions were to get in touch with the enemy on every possible occasion and report his Location and Strength. The nature of the Fighting and the rapid Change in the Locations of Units and Formations made Communications between Forward Units and Headquarters of Divisions and Corps erratic, and reliable information was difficult to get. Owing to their Equipment and great mobility, the Motor Machine Gunners were assigned this all important Task. On arrival at VILLERS-BRETONNEUX Capt. CLARK assumed command of "A" Battery also, thus adding the 2 Armoured Cars, under Lieut. W.H. SMITH, to his Command. During the night, the following wire was received by Capt. CLARK from the XIX Corps H.Q.:-

"You will detail 4 Armoured Cars to remain at XIX Corps Headquarters VILLERS-BRETONNEUX ready for immediate action. Also 2 Cars to report at 24th Division at CAIX by 4.00 A.M."

The 2 Armoured Cars of "A" Battery were detailed to report to the Twenty-fourth Division. The third Armoured Car of "A" Battery, under Lieut. R.M. THOMSON, reported to VILLERS-BRETONNEUX on the morning of March 28th, after it had been repaired.

2 Armoured Cars Co-operate with Twenty-fourth Div. ; March 28th.

Lieut. W.H. SMITH, who was in charge of the 2 Armoured Cars (4 Machine Guns) operating with the Twenty-fourth Division, gives the following account of the Operations of his Detachment on March 28th:-

"The next day (March 28th), I went into ROSIERES, VRELY and back into CAIX, where I was ordered to take up positions. British and French Troops were here fighting side by side. The Line was held up to 2.00 P.M., when they retired. We covered their withdrawal with 4 Machine Guns. During this time we were attacked by 11 enemy aeroplanes, whose business was apparently to locate a Battery of French "Seventy-fives" located in a Wood. We opened fire with our 4 Guns and drove them off. Our 4 No. 1 Gunners, Privates NASH, TAYLOR, MEISTER and another, continued to operate their Guns in spite of the hostile Machine Gun fire. We then moved our positions about 200 yds., and immediately afterwards our former positions were shelled with 'Whizzbangs' and High Explosive Shells. After taking up our second position the aeroplanes returned and once more located us, signalling to their artillery by flying Zig-Zag up the road. We at once moved back to our first positions, dismounted 2 Guns and operated the other 2 from the Car, catching the Hun coming overland between VRELY, ROSIERES and CAIX. After holding them until the Infantry were well to the rear, we moved down into CAIX,

⁹⁰ Lieut. W.H. SMITH's Report on the Action of "A" Battery, on March 27th and 28th.

where we noticed the Germans on the outskirts. We engaged them again, inflicting severe Casualties, and having our own Cars riddled with Machine Gun Bullets. This was at about 7.00 P.M. The Infantry were now well to our Rear; so we picked up about a dozen wounded men - some of whom who died on the way - and returned to GENTELLES.

The Headquarters of the Group consisting of "A" and "B" Batteries, had been moved during the day from VILLERS-BRETONNEUX to GENTELLES.

2 Armoured Cars in Front of VILLERS-BRETONNEUX.

In the meantime, Capt. CLARK, O.C., Group, during the morning of March 28th, had sent 2 Armoured Cars, under Lieut. R.M. THOMSON, to operate on the Road between VILLERS-BRETONNEUX and WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT, and 2 Other Armoured Cars, under Lieut. GREEN, to operate on the AMIENS-ROYE Road. Lieut. THOMSON's Detachment with their 4 Machine Guns engaged several enemy Aeroplanes during the day, but as no hostile Attacks developed on that part of the Front the Armoured Cars did not get into Action.

Enemy Pressure Against XIX Corps Right Flank.

The British Line between the AVRE and LUCE RIVERS had assumed the shape of a narrow Salient on the morning of March 28th. During the previous night, the enemy had worked his way Southwards from MORCOURT and CERISY and had entered BAYONVILLERS and WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT. To meet this situation our Infantry had occupied a Line between ROSIERES and MARCELCAVE facing N. Early in the morning of March 28th the enemy had begun to push Southwards from GILLAU COURT and Westwards from VRELY and ROSIERES. S. of the AMIENS-ROYE Road, the enemy had entered CONTOIRE, on the River AVRE, and was pressing the French Troops back upon HANGEST. A very gallant but fruitless attempt had been made by the Sixty-first Division in Position between WIENCOURT-l'EQUIPPE and MARCELCAVE to lessen the enemy pressure from the N. The Position of the British Divisions in the ARVILLERS-CAIX Area became untenable. In the course of the afternoon and evening, therefore, our Infantry withdrew to the Rear of the Southern Portion of the AMIENS Defence Line, MEZIERES-DEMUIN, held by the Twentieth Division, which as already stated had been relieved early that morning by the French in the FOLIES-WARVILLERS Area.

2 Armoured Cars Operate Along AMIENS-ROYE Road.

Lieut. GREEN, with 2 Armoured Cars of the 1st C.M.M.G. Bde., operated along the AMIENS-ROYE Road and his 4 Machine Guns did fine execution during the German Advance from BOUCHOIR towards MEZIERES. The Detachment inflicted severe Casualties on the enemy and their work on this part of the Front considerably assisted our Infantry in their withdrawal from a most difficult Position. To avoid hostile Shelling, which at times assumed the proportions of a Bombardment, the Cars were kept moving up and down the Road, but close enough to the Front to enable the Crews on the Cars to engage the enemy at Medium Range with the Fire of their Machine Guns. While thus maneuvering along the Highway, 1 of the Cars ran into the ditch on the side of the Road and under intense enemy Machine Gun and Rifle Fire the Crew succeeded in getting it back on the Road. Lieut. TRENWITH, who was in Command of this Car, was severely wounded at this time. After this, Lieut. GREEN received Orders to report with his Detachment back to GENTELLES, Group Headquarters. From GENTELLES this Officer went on a Side-car, driven by Sgt. MORRISON down the VILLERS-BRETONNEUX-WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT Road to bring in Lieut. THOMSON's 2 Armoured Cars. The Side-car ran into the Fire of a German Machine Gun firing from the direction of WARFUSEE and both Officer and N.C.O. on the car were wounded. In spite of the intensity of the German Fire, Pte. T. McKENZIE went forward on his Solo Motor Cycle and succeeded in bringing back Lieut. GREEN on the rear of his Cycle. This soldier went forward a second time to get Sgt. MORRISON, but found that he had already gone to a First Aid Post, which had been established in that vicinity by the Infantry.

AMIENS Defence Line; Evening March 28th.

At nightfall March 28th, British Troops held approximately the AMIENS Defence Line S. of the SOMME from MEZIERES to IGNAUCOURT and HAMEL. The Twentieth Division held the Front S. of the River LUCE and Carey's Force, the Front between the LUCE and SOMME Rivers. The 10 Machine Guns of the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade, under Lieut. T.A. SMITH, co-operated with Carey's Force in holding the Line. In the evening of the 28th, the Motor Machine Gunners inflicted many Casualties on the enemy, when he attacked and captured MARCELCAVE. They also assisted our Infantry in establishing a new Line just W. of the Village. Lieut. T.A. SMITH's Detachment was reinforced during

the day (28th) by 4 Officers and 27 other ranks, British Machine Gunners, who came from the Machine Gun Base Depot at CAMIERS and were temporarily attached to the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade. Along with these Reinforcements, a number of British Machine Gunners collected from the various Stragglers Posts were also sent into the Line.

Motor Machine Gunners Co-operate With Carey's Force; March 29th.

Enemy pressure against the XIX Corps Front recommenced on the morning of March 29th. On the Right MEZIERES had to be abandoned, but on the extreme Left the enemy Attacks E. and S.-E. of HAMEL were repulsed. The Guns of the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade in position near HAMEL helped by their Fire to check the enemy Advance. The remnants of the Eaton and Yukon Batteries, which had been relieved in the Line in the QUESNEL Area on the morning of March 28th⁹¹ together with the Detachment of the Eaton Battery, under Lieut. MARSHALL, which had been withdrawn from the CHAULNES Front on the morning of the 26th⁹² were reorganized into 1 Battery of 16 Guns, under Capt. MEURLING, M.C., and were sent into the Line on the afternoon of March 29th to relieve the Detachment under Lieut. T.A. SMITH. This 16-Gun Battery arrived at VILLERS-BRETONNEUX at 3.30 P.M., and Capt. MEURLING reported for Instructions to the H.Q. Carey's Force, at the Prisoners of War Cage 1 mile W. of the Town. After an interview with General CAREY and his Chief of Staff, Lieut.-Col. HARVEY, the O.C. of the joint Eaton and Yukon Batteries disposed his Guns in accordance with the requirements of the Situation. In addition to the 16 Machine Guns he had brought from HEBECOURT, Capt. MEURLING secured another 16 Guns from Carey's Force, and also collected a number of British Machine Gunners and Infantrymen Stragglers to help him man the extra Guns. By 7.00 P.M. March 29th, the 32 Machine Guns were occupying Positions in co-operation with Carey's Force, along the Front between the LUCE and SOMME RIVERS. 10 Guns, under Lieut. MARSHALL, were in Positions on the high ground above AUBERCOURT to cover the LUCE Valley and the approaches into DEMUIN, 10 Guns, under Lieut. W.J. CAMPBELL, just W. of MARCELCAVE, 4 Guns astride the Main Road E. of VILLERS-BRETONNEUX, 4 Guns under Bty. S.M. FOREST (Yukon Battery), at the Cross-roads about 1½ miles S. of HAMEL, and 4 Guns, under Lieut. L.M. BLACK on the heights of HAMEL. Each of the 32 Guns was manned by 2 Men. Lieut. T.A. SMITH, on completion of Relief, withdrew his Detachment to 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade H.Q. at HEBECOURT.

During the night March 29th/30th, the enemy established a footing in MOREUIL WOOD, between the AVRE RIVER and the AMIENS-ROYE Road, and farther N. along the LUCE RIVER his Troops were concentrating in IGNAUCOURT. In order to meet a possible enemy Attack next morning in the direction of DEMUIN, against the Right Flank of Carey's Force, all the available Infantrymen of the Force were ordered to get into Position on the Left Flank of the LUCE to cover DEMUIN from the E. and Capt. MEURLING, to strengthen his Machine Gun Defence at AUBERCOURT, directed Sgt.-Major FOREST to move his 4 Guns from VILLERS-BRETONNEUX to the Right Flank.

Action on the LUCE RIVER; Morning March 30th.

The Front between the AVRE and the LUCE became very active again at daybreak on March 30th. The enemy was gradually pushing back the French out of MOREUIL WOOD and, by sheer weight of numbers and regardless of losses, he succeeded in driving our Infantry off the Left Bank of the LUCE and occupying DEMUIN. Lieut. MARSHALL's 14 Guns did most effective work from the N. Bank of the River by bringing Enfilade Fire to bear, at a Range of 1700 to 2000 yds., on German Infantry advancing on DEMUIN. Lieut. MARSHALL had disposed his 10 Machine Guns in front of the DEMUIN-MARCELCAVE Road, between the intersection of the AUBERCOURT-HANGARD and DEMUIN-VILLERS-BRETONNEUX Roads and the junction of the AUBERCOURT-MARCELCAVE and DEMUIN-MARCELCAVE Roads. 4 Guns, under Corporal BRADLEY, were on the Right of this Line, looking into the Valley Southwards. 4 Guns, manned by British Machine Gunners and under direct control of Lieut. MARSHALL, were placed about 200 yds. N.-E. of the first 4 Guns, and could direct their Fire on the approaches to AUBERCOURT and into the River Valley. 2 Guns, under Corporal McLAUGHLIN, were sited in the Centre of the Line. The remaining 4 Guns, under Corporal McKENNA were on the extreme Left of the Line, with Fields of Fire to the N. and E. Lieut. MARSHALL ordered Sgt.-Major FOREST to place his 4 Guns on the Right of Corporal BRADLEY's Detachment to cover DEMUIN and the high ground S.-E. of the Village.

⁹¹ See Page 181.

⁹² See Page 170.

Lieut. MARSHALL gives the following account of the Action of his Machine Guns on the morning of March 30th:-

"The Germans were in platoons marching in fours along the top of the ridge in a Westerly direction. They presented their flank to us. They were visible to my 4 Guns (manned by British Machine Gunners) and two of Corporal BRADLEY's 4, and we all opened up. We had about 16 Belts per Gun, and the Infantrymen filled them for us as soon as they were exhausted. The enemy did not succeed in his efforts to effect crossings in the direction of COURCELLES, AUBERCOURT or DEMUIN, while we were in the positions above mentioned. Our fire did not entirely check the march of the enemy platoons on the South side of the LUCE, but we inflicted quite a lot of casualties. We could see them fall and some turn and walk back.

"Our Infantry now received Orders to withdraw to the higher ground in rear and they gave as a reason that the enemy were crossing the river LUCE farther West. This retirement began on the right of the line for the reason that the left was a salient on the highest ground and controlled the rest of the line. When the right of the line began to fall back our gunners went too; the infantry assisted in carrying belt-boxes.

"After the guns on the right had withdrawn, I went along to the centre guns, under Corporal McLaughlin. When I reached his positions, a sniping fire had already broken out from the direction of the road running through V.20a. and c. (the Road running due N. from AUBERCOURT), We could see groups of the enemy going along this road but only in places as the road was mostly sunken. We fired on these and we fired at sniper whom we located, but there was no definite attack made on our positions. The enemy was evidently making a demonstration just to engage our attention. All but about 5 infantrymen had left this bit of trench (trenches were about waist deep and were in sections of 25 to 40 yds. long). We were now the right of the line, so after firing for some time with rifles and Machine Guns we withdrew from there one man at a time.

"When these 2 guns had moved out of their forward positions, I went along to Corporal McKENNA's guns which were in the salient on the left of the line. The German artillery had located the salient and had inflicted heavy casualties on the infantry who were still there, but none of our men had been hit; they had, however, for some time been unable to do anything as a heavy and continuous Machine Gun fire was sweeping the parapets from the North and North East. This retirement of the infantry had already begun from this sector and so our guns went out, one man at a time. Fire was very heavy and there were quite a few casualties in getting out.

"Our new line was established in U.24.a and b and U.18.d (about 1000 yds. W. of the original line and running diagonally across the DEMUIN-VILLERS-BRETONNEUX Road, S. of the Wood, E. of the BOIS de HANGARD)."

Lieut. MARSHALL was wounded during the withdrawal of the last 4 Guns of his Group, and after his Gun Detachments had taken up their Positions in the new Line, he proceeded to a Casualty Clearing Station and on his way was reported to Capt. MEURLING, whose Headquarters were on the main AMIENS Road about 1 mile W. of VILLERS-BRETONNEUX. Battery Sgt.-Major FOREST was left in command of the Motor Machine Gun Detachments in the AUBERCOURT-HANGARD Area.

The Detachment, under Lieut. CAMPBELL, was heavily engaged W. of MARCELCAVE in the enemy advance in this Area. His Guns covered the withdrawal of the Infantry.\

Operations Along the AVRE March 30th.

The situation along the AVRE River was considerably improved during the course of the morning by the presence in that Area of the Second Cavalry Division. A brilliant counter-attack carried out by the Canadian Cavalry Brigade, with the 3rd Cavalry Brigade in Support, had restored our Line in MOREUIL WOOD, but a Gap appeared to exist between the Cavalry and the Twentieth Division on the Left. Capt. CLARK, O.C. "A" and "B" Batteries, 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade, who had used his Detachment on March 29th in patrolling the Roads and obtaining information as to the enemy Dispositions, detailed 2 Armoured Cars on the morning of the 30th to co-operate with the Canadian Cavalry Brigade along the RIVER AVRE. Lieut. W.H. SMITH, who had command of these 2 Cars was ordered to place his 4 Machine Guns in Positions near CASTEL from which he could cover the River Valley, the Railway Track and the Bridge at CASTEL. This was, perhaps, a precaution against an advance by an enemy between the Cavalry and the Twentieth Division. The Machine Gunners stayed in their Positions until 7.30 P.M. but had no opportunity of getting into Action.

Capt. CLARK also detailed 2 other Armoured Cars to work under the Orders of Capt. MEURLING, O.C. Eaton and Yukon Batteries. Lieut. PEEBLES was in charge of these 2 Cars, which operated on the Roads around HANGARD, AUBERCOURT, MARCELCAVE, VILLERS-BRETONNEUX and HAMEL.

Carey's Force Broken Up.

The progress of the enemy N. of the LUCE was checked and, in the afternoon (March 30th), his Troops were finally driven back to about the Line of the AUBERCOURT-MARCELCAVE Road by determined counter-attacks carried out by elements of the Sixty-sixth Division and the 9th Australian Brigade. In the evening, our Line S. of the LUCE was somewhat re-established by successful Counter-attacks delivered by Troops of the Twentieth and Fiftieth Division. Hostile Attacks delivered by the enemy on both sides of the SOMME, the same evening, were repulsed by the First Cavalry Division and the Third Australian Division. During the night March 30th/31st, the Sixty-first Division took over command of the Line S. of the AMIENS-WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT Road from General CAREY, and the First Cavalry Division took command of the Line N. of the same Road. March 30th saw the arrival of the first British Reserve (Third Australian Division) on the FIFTH ARMY Front. That night Carey's Force was broken up after it had served a most useful purpose, viz., the Organisation and Defence of the AMIENS Line, with the double effect of having checked the enemy advance and allowed our exhausted and greatly weakened Infantry Divisions to withdraw and reorganize in Rear of this Line. Although Carey's Force was broken up, the Motor Machine Gunners remained in the Line to reinforce the relieving Divisions, which were tired and very much depleted in numbers from the previous 8 days fighting.

Armoured Cars; March 31st.

The Fighting between the AVRE and LUCE RIVERS continued on March 31st and our Troops were driven back to the Line from MOREUIL Railway Station to HANGARD. Lieut. R.M. THOMSON operated, during the day, along the AMIENS-ROYE Road. When returning from a dash down the Road, the Detachment was caught in a heavy enemy Artillery Barrage just S.-E. of HORGES, and unfortunately 1 of the Armoured Cars ran into a Shell-hole on the Road, and 3 of its Crew became Casualties. After the 2 Guns on it had been taken off, the Car was temporarily abandoned. In the evening, after dark, a party went forward and found that the car had been hit by enemy Shells and was burnt up. It was, therefore, left there and later fell into enemy hands. The same day, March 31st, Lieut. W.H. SMITH operated with 2 Armoured Cars between HANGARD and DOMART. No serious Attacks developed during the day between the LUCE and the SOMME, our Line from HANGARD to the W. of WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT was maintained.

1st C.M.M.G.B. March 31st to April 4th.

During the night March 31st/April 1st, the Borden Battery, under Capt. O'REILLY, left HEBECOURT and went into the Line to relieve the Guns and Personnel of the Eaton Battery. On completion of this Relief Lieut. CAMPBELL took the Eaton Battery to HEBECOURT, Brigade H.Q.

With the exception of another successful Attack by the Second Cavalry Division between the AVRE RIVER and the AMIENS-ROYE Road which further improved our Position there, nothing new developed on April 1st on the XIX Corps Front. April 2nd and 3rd were quiet days in front of the British Line S. of the SOMME. On April 2nd, the FIFTH ARMY ceased to exist as such and became the Reserve Army. General SIR HENRY RAWLINSON had taken command of all the British Troops S. of the SOMME, now known as the FOURTH ARMY. On April 3rd, elements of Carey's Force still in the Line were withdrawn and that night the Machine Gun Detachment, under Capt. MEURLING, was relieved in the Line by the British and Australian Machine Gun Companies. Just before being relieved, the Borden Battery was subjected to heavy Shelling, and had 2 Other Ranks, wounded, 1 Gun destroyed and another Gun damaged. "A" and "B" Batteries (Capt. CLARK) of the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade, which, since March 27th, had been operating on the Roads along the British Front between the AVRE and the SOMME obtaining valuable information as to the Dispositions and Strength of the enemy and frequently engaging favorable Targets, were also withdrawn from the Line on the night April 3rd/4th. By the morning of April 4th, all the Motor Machine Gun Batteries were out of the Line and concentrated at HEBECOURT, 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade H.Q. The Brigade, now under the Orders of the FOURTH ARMY, expected to return to the Canadian Corps on the 6th.

XIX Corps Front; April 4th.

The XIX Corps Front had undergone no alteration since April 1st. When the Motor Machine Gunners were relieved on the night April 3rd/4th, the Line ran:- Cemetery E. of HANGARD, thence N. for 500

yds., thence N.-E. in front of Wood E. of BOIS de HANGARD, 2000 yds. W. of MARCELCAVE. 1500 yds. W. of WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT, through BOIS de TAILLOUX and due N. to the SOMME RIVER. French Troops had relieved the British Division S. of the LUCE. The Eighteenth Division and 9th Australian Infantry Brigade held the Line between the LUCE and the AMIENS-WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT Road and the Fourteenth Division was in the Line N. of this Road. Early on the morning of April 4th, this Line was driven back by strong enemy Attacks preceded by heavy Artillery Bombardments. The Attack S. of the AMIENS-VILLERS-BRETONNEUX Road was repulsed but the enemy penetrated our Line in the vicinity of BOIS d'ACCROCHE, thus affecting the remainder of the FOURTH ARMY Front. HAMEL was lost and at Noon our Troops held roughly the Line: VAIRE-sous-CORBIE-500 yds. W. of BOIS de VAIRE-2000 yds. E. of WILLERS-BRETONNEUX-W. of MARCELCAVE-HANGARD. During the afternoon the enemy who had made some progress against the French on both sides of the AVRE RIVER, heavily attacked the Eighteenth Division causing the withdrawal of the FOURTH ARMY Right in the vicinity of BOIS de HANGARD. This movement on the Right and the penetration of the enemy on the N. exposed the Flanks of the 9th Australian Infantry Brigade, which then withdrew to a point 500 yds. S. of VILLERS-BRETONNEUX.

1st C.M.M.G. Bde. April 4th.

At 3.00 p.m. April 4th, Lieut.-Col. WALKER (O.C., 1st C.M.M.G. Bde.) received Orders from the FOURTH ARMY H.Q. to send his Brigade into Action to assist the Infantry to check the enemy Advance and to "hold VILLERS-BRETONNEUX at all costs."⁹³ Thus the reorganisation of the Motor Machine Gun Batteries preparatory to their move back to the Canadian Corps was hurriedly altered into preparations to proceed to the Line. By 4.00 P.M., "A" and "B" Batteries, under Capt. CLARK, and the Eaton and Yukon Batteries, under Capt. MEURLING, were operating in the neighbourhood of VILLERS-BRETONNEUX. The Borden Battery was kept in Reserve at HEBECOURT. Lieuts. T.A. SMITH and R.M. THOMSON, with 2 Armoured Cars each, operated on the Main Road between VILLERS-BRETONNEUX and WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT and the other 2 Armoured Cars,⁹⁴ under Lieut. LYNCH were in Action on the VILLERS-BRETONNEUX-HAMEL Road. Many good Targets were engaged and numerous Casualties were inflicted on the enemy, particularly by the Machine Gunners working S.-W. of BOIS-de-WAIRE. All the enemy attempts at further Advance from this direction were frustrated by the Fire of our Artillery, Machine Guns and Rifles.

In the meantime, Capt. MEURLING detailed the Machine Guns of his 2 Batteries to take up positions E. and N.-E. and N. of VILLERS-BRETONNEUX and to cover all approaches to the Town. 4 Guns of the Yukon Battery under Lieut. L.M. BLACK were dug in, in front of the Town. The remaining 4 Guns of the Yukon Battery and the 8 Guns of the Eaton Battery, under Lieut. CAMPBELL, were to occupy Positions on the Left. At this time the enemy was heavily shelling our Positions astride the AMIENS-WARFUSEE Road. While going forward to take up their Positions, Lieut. CAMPBELL's Detachment suffered many Casualties from this Shelling: 4 Other Ranks were killed and 26, wounded. There were sufficient Gunners left to man only 2 Guns which were placed in Positions to the Left of VILLERS-BRETONNEUX. Lieut. PEEBLES was in charge of these 2 Guns.

During this Bombardment, an enemy Shell exploded and set on fire a Motor Machine Gun Brigade 3-ton Lorry, full of S.A.A. (Bulk and in Belts) which was being unloaded by the gun Crews of the Eaton and Yukon Batteries prior to their going to forward Positions from the Eastern outskirts of VILLERS-BRETONNEUX. Two Char-a-banc Cars (Men's Transport) standing close to the burning Lorry were in grave danger of being set on fire too; but, in spite of the great risk he was taking in approaching the burning lorry and Ammunition, Private WEGG, a member of the Motor Machine Gun Crews, voluntarily went forward and drove both the Char-a-banc Cars away into safety.

Just before dusk, Lieut. BLACK, who had no Men left to handle his Guns, joined the Armoured Car Detachment operating on the Main Road E. of VILLERS-BRETONNEUX, and took 1 Armoured Car forward to a point about 1½ mile W. of WARFUSEE-ABANCOURT. The 2 Machine Guns of this Car were fired from their Mounts on the Car, enfilading the enemy Positions on either side of the Road. Excellent Targets were obtained and many Casualties were inflicted on the enemy. After the Guns had fired about 2500 Rounds each, the Car withdrew without suffering a single Casualty.

⁹³ FOURTH ARMY General Staff Diary for April, 1918.

⁹⁴ "A" and "B" Batteries together had now 6 Armoured Cars only.

Capt. MEURLING, who had sent a message, earlier in the evening, to Lieut.-Col. WALKER, asking for more Guns and Men, was reinforced at about 6.30 P.M. that evening, April 4th, by the Borden Battery consisting of 6 Machine Guns and Crews and commanded by Capt. O'REILLY, M.C. These Guns were immediately placed N.-E. of VILLERS-BRETONNEUX. Shortly after the Borden Battery had taken up its Positions, the enemy laid down an Artillery Barrage along our Front. Expecting an enemy Attack to follow this Artillery activity, Capt. MEURLING ordered the Borden Battery to Fire with all their Guns on enemy Positions at a range of 2500 yds. It was later reported that this Machine Gun Fire broke up a large body of the enemy who were, perhaps, concentrating for an Attack.

FOURTH ARMY Line; April 5th and 6th.

No Attack developed on the XIX Corps Front during the night April 4th/5th. The following day, the enemy directed his effort against the THIRD ARMY, N. of the SOMME. There was little Fighting on the British Front S. of the SOMME, but there was no appreciable change in the Line which ran approximately as follows:- N. of HANGARD (held by the French) -- through BOIS de HANGARD -- thence N.-E. to midway between MARCELCAVE and VILLERS-BRETONNEUX -- 500 yds. E. of BOIS de VAIRE --- along the road to VAIRE-sous-CORBIE. With the exception of a few minor changes, this was the general Line held by the British Troops between the LUCE and SOMME RIVERS until August, 1918, the commencement of the British and French Offensive.

There was no change in the Situation on April 6th. The Borden Battery and the remnants of the Eaton and Yukon Batteries maintained their Positions in front and on the Left of VILLERS-BRETONNEUX. Capt. MEURLING and Capt. CLARK (O.C., "A" and "B" Batteries) established their H.Q. on the Western outskirts of the Town. The 6 Armoured Cars of "A" and "B" batteries moved along the roads behind the FOURTH ARMY Front but they had no occasion to get into Action against the enemy. Capt. CLARK's Detachment worked in conjunction with 4 French Armoured Cars operating behind the French Divisions S. of the LUCE.

Relief of XIX Corps by III Corps.

On April 5th, FOURTH ARMY H.Q. moved from DURY to FLEXECOURT and 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade H.Q. moved from HEBECOURT to DURY. In the evening of the same day, the III Corps relieved the XIX Corps. Command of the Divisions in the Line and the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade passed from the XIX Corps to the relieving Corps.

Events April 7th to 9th.

April 7th and 8th were 2 uneventful days on the III Corps Front. On the 7th, the Australian Corps was transferred to the FOURTH ARMY and Australian Divisions were gradually moving into the Line S. of the SOMME. On the 8th, H.Q. 1st C.M.M.G. Bde. was moved from DURY to MONTIERS, 2 miles N.-W. of AMIENS. The Borden, Eaton and Yukon Batteries, under Capt. MEURLING, were relieved during the night April 8th/9th by Machine Guns of the Australian Divisions, and the following morning "A" and "B" Batteries, under Capt. CLARK, were withdrawn from the Line. All 5 Batteries moved from the Line back to Brigade H.Q. at MONTIERES.

1st C.M.M.G. Bde. Returns to Canadian Corps.

Early on the Morning of April 10th, the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade received Orders from the FOURTH ARMY through the III Corps, to return to the Canadian Corps in the FIRST ARMY Area. Accordingly, the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade and attached Batteries, under Lieut. Colonel WALKER, left their Billets in MANTIERES at 10.00 A.M. the same day and arrived at their old Camp in VEDREL, 2 miles S. of BARLIN, at 4.00 P.M. The journey was made by Road through FREVENT, ST. POL, DIVION, HOUDAIN and RESNICOURT. As soon as it reached VEDREL, the Motor Machine Gun Brigade was placed in FIRST ARMY Reserve.

Casualties.

The Casualties suffered by the 1st C.M.M.G.B. and the Borden, Eaton and Yukon Batteries during the period March 24th - April 7th. were:-

Officers			Other Ranks			Total		TOTAL
Killed	Wounded	Missing	Killed	Wounded	Missing	Officers	Other Ranks	All Ranks

5	8	1	20	100	10	14	130	144
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The Total of 144 does not include the Casualties suffered by the British Machine Gunners attached to the Canadian Motor Machine Gun Batteries during the same period.

General Remarks and Observations.

Throughout the period the 1st Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade ("A" and "B" Batteries) and the Borden, Eaton and Yukon Batteries were in Action on the Fronts of the FIFTH, FOURTH and THIRD ARMIES, the Canadian Motor Machine Gunners played an important part in delaying and checking the Advance of the enemy, in covering the withdrawal of our Infantry and in strengthening with their Machine Guns the Lines of Resistance organized at various stages of the Battle. During the night March 22nd/23rd, 1918, the 1st Canadian Machine Gun Brigade was in the Canadian Corps Area with 4 of its Batteries employed in the construction of Machine Gun Emplacements in the VIMY RIDGE Defences. By 4.00 P.M. March 23rd, the Batteries had been withdrawn from the Forward area and the whole Unit had reported for duty to the FIFTH ARMY H.Q. at VILLERS-BRETONNEUX. On the morning of March 24th, 4 Batteries were already heavily engaged with the enemy and were co-operating with Troops of the Right and Left Corps of the FIFTH ARMY. In the afternoon of the same day, the remaining Battery was also thrown into the Battle with the Centre Corps of the ARMY. In less than 36 hours the 1st C.M.M.G. Brigade had withdrawn from the VIMY Front, had traveled by Road over 70 miles to the SOMME Front and had all of its 40 Machine Guns spread over a Line of about 35 miles where a fierce battle was raging.

Well supported by Artillery, Machine Guns, Trench Mortars and other auxiliary weapons, a large number of specially trained enemy Divisions were making a tremendous effort on march 24th to further exploit the success they had already gained on the first 3 days of the Battle. Our exhausted and very much depleted Divisions were fighting stubbornly against heavy odds. A large percentage of their Artillery and Machine Guns had been put out of Action, destroyed or captured by the enemy.⁹⁵ The FIFTH ARMY had practically no Supports, Reserves or Reinforcements to strengthen or relieve its Divisions in the Line. It was at this stage of the Battle, when the enemy in over whelming numbers was pressing hard against our weakened Infantry, that the 1st C.M.M.G.B. joined the XVIII, XIX and VII Corps. The timely arrival of the Motor Machine Gun Batteries was greatly appreciated by the G.O.C., FIFTH ARMY, and the Commanders of the Corps, Divisions and Brigades to which they were attached.

In modern warfare, the Machine Gun has proved itself to be an essential weapon; and without it no Defence Scheme can be considered complete. The value of the 40 Machine Guns of the Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade will be more readily understood when it is remembered that a Machine Gun is equivalent in Fire Power to about 80 Rifles. The great mobility of the Brigade and their 8 Armoured Cars further increased the value of the Fire Power concentrated in their Guns. Lieut.-Col. WALKER, D.S.O., M.C., Officer commanding the 1st C.M.M.G.B., makes the following comments on the above Operations:-

"The fire power of 40 mobile Machine Guns meant a great deal to the exhausted troops of the Fifth Army, and during the fighting in March and April, they co-operated with all the Corps in the Fifth Army. Scattered remnants of the tired Infantry were always ready to rally round the Machine Guns and Armoured Cars, and make determined stands against desperate odds.

"In a fight of this kind Armoured Cars and Motorcyclist Scouts are of great value. They can always keep in touch with the enemy, break up his patrols, and interfere with his reconnaissance work. Motor-cyclist Scouts were also invaluable for inter-communication work. One of the advantages of Armoured Cars is that they may be withdrawn at night, and their mobility permits of their being sent well back of our lines to re-equip, and if necessary to bring forward again new and rested gun teams."

The above account of the Operations of the 1st C.M.M.G.B. during the period March 24th - April 10th contains outstanding examples of good leadership, initiative, skill, boldness and steadiness on the part of All ranks in the handling of Detachments and Guns and in carrying out difficult tasks under unprecedented conditions. The qualities displayed by Officers and Men together with the Fire Power of

⁹⁵ Up to March 23rd, the FIFTH ARMY had lost from different causes about 366 Artillery Guns of all caliber's.

the 40 Machine Guns, made the work of this comparatively small Unit effective and of great assistance to the exhausted and disorganized Divisions of the FIFTH ARMY. In this connection Lieut.-Col. WALKER writes:-

"Had it not been that both Officers and Men alike had been trained to fight on their own initiative at such a time when orders could not reach them, the Unit would have been a failure, and its tremendous fire power would not have been effective, for it so often happened that the Headquarters of Divisions and Brigades, being continually on the move, could not be found. The task allotted to the Unit, and to the various Batteries in the line, was a big one, and gave ample scope for initiative. The task was to fight a rear-guard action, strengthen the line at any dangerous point on the Army front, and to delay the advance of the enemy as much as possible."

Throughout the whole of the ABOVE Operations, Batteries kept in touch with Brigade Headquarters by means of Motor-cyclists. The information received from the Batteries in the Line, giving the Dispositions of our own and the enemy's Troops, was at once forwarded to ARMY H.Q. by Lieut.-Col. WALKER, thus helping to a large extent to clear up doubtful situations. Lieut.-Col. WALKER also sent daily reports to the Canadian Corps Machine Gun Officer. Copies of these reports were distributed among the Units of the Canadian Corps. The mobility of the Brigade was such that it was able to operate on the whole of the ARMY Front, and often filled critical gaps in our Line and prevented the enemy from breaking through. Batteries and Sections being self-contained Fighting Units were easily detached to deal with any special Situation.

The moral support of the Armoured Cars and Machine Guns was very great. Their unexpected help on many occasions put fresh heart into the Infantry, who were fighting against overwhelming odds.

The following is an extract from the XVIII Corps Narrative of Operations, March 21st to March 28th, 1918:-

"Assistance was forthcoming in the shape of 2 Canadian Motor Machine Gun Batteries, which on arrival were placed at the disposal of the G.O.C., 20th Division. In all subsequent operations up to the 31st march, these Batteries performed yeoman service in holding the extended fronts allotted to the 20th Division."

Similar remarks are passed by the G.O.C., Twentieth Division, in his report on the same Operations, which also contain the following:-

"Touch was obtained (March 26th) by the 61st Brigade at BEAUFORT with the 24th Division at WARVILLERS. To assist in delaying the enemy, 4 Motor Machine Guns were ordered to occupy a position near the Cross Roads N.W. of MOUVROY. These Guns proved to be most valuable, not only in delaying the enemy advance, but also in inflicting heavy losses on the enemy."

Under date April 4th, 1918, reference to the 1st C.M.M.G.B. is made in the FOURTH ARMY War Diary:-

"The Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade was ordered into action at 2 p.m. with instructions to hold VILLERS-BRETONNEUX at all costs. One Battery suffered considerably from shell fire while passing through the village but the remainder took up their positions without incident. There is no doubt that the enemy suffered severe casualties especially in the vicinity of HAMEL where oblique Fire practically annihilated his attacking Infantry."

The surprise effect of our Armoured Cars and Machine Guns operating on various parts of the Front is illustrated by references made to them in the German Wireless messages of March 26th and 27th, 1918, respectively:-

"All along the roads of approach our troops have pressed forward against newly brought division and numerous armoured cars."

"The enemy have fought with great tenacity to regain Albert, and on the heights S. of the town sanguinary battles took place, supported by armoured cars."

Messages Received by 1st C.M.M.G.B.

Many messages of congratulations were received. One from General WATTS, commanding the XIX Corps reads:-

"Please accept and convey to all ranks who have been engaged in the recent battle my thanks for their excellent work. They have given invaluable service to the XIX Corps."

On March 30th, SIR ARTHUR CURRIE, the Canadian Corps Commander, wrote to Lieut.-Col. WALKER:-

"I thank you so much for your reports. They are so inspiring. What good quality and deadly work you and your gallant gunners are doing. We are all so proud of you. More power to you, keep up the good fight. The only thing to do is to stick to it. We'll win yet. We're winning now."

Lieut.-Col. R. BRUTINEL, Canadian Corps Machine Gun Officer, also addresses a letter to Lieut.-Col. WALKER which reads in part as follows:-

"I am very proud that the Brigade set such a splendid example of determination and bravery in their fight against overwhelming odds. I knew you could place your entire confidence in the steadfastness and stubborn courage of all ranks under you."

"The knowledge of the good work done by the Brigade assuages somewhat the sorrow brought about by the heavy losses you have suffered in gallant officers and men."

Lessons Learnt.

Some of the Lessons learnt by the 1st C.M.M.G.B. from the Operations on the SOMME in March-April, 1918, are given in the following circular which was sent to all the Canadian Machine Gun Units in France:-

1. Tactical.

(a) Enemy Tactics.

"The enemy invariably screened the advance of his Infantry by use of smoke bombs thrown by hand.

"Under cover of this smoke screen which resembled a mist the hostile Infantry advanced deployed, or in small columns, preceded by a large number of light machine guns.

"When held up by our Machine gun fire the enemy sent up coloured flares as a signal to the artillery in the vicinity, to clear the way by shelling any possible machine gun positions on our side. At the same time hostile machine guns were employed sweeping hedges and other possible machine gun positions. These flares also seemed to be a signal to the Infantry on the flanks to commence outflanking and enveloping movements, which through lack of support on our flanks nearly always compelled our machine guns to withdraw.

"Concealment is of primary importance. The enemy will not advance against machine gun fire. As soon as he located the approximate positions of our Batteries he worked around and outflanked them.

"If the enemy is massing within reasonable range, fire should at once be opened up, if not the opportunity of killing the enemy may be lost, owing to his working around in such a manner as to deny a good field of fire.

"If possible positions should be sited so that they command a good view of both flanks.

"The shortage of machine guns was very badly felt. If machine guns had been in sufficient numbers, the tactics of the enemy could not have succeeded as well nor as early as they did.

"A large number of excellent enemy marksmen were used as snipers, who worked around the flanks of machine gun positions and picked off the Crews. Certainly 50% of our Casualties at Gun positions were due to such marksmen."

(b) Our Tactics.

"These were of necessity very simple. They consisted chiefly in giving all concerned a free hand in checking the advance of the enemy and inflicting as many casualties as possible. The order that no machine guns were to withdraw until out-flanked was rigorously enforced. Particular attention was also paid to communications. Under all circumstances guns had to be in communication with their H.Q.

Owing to lack of man and fire power, due to the Infantry sometimes having rifles and sometimes not, and more often than not no ammunition, and the lack of success in forming an organized line, the

guns were compelled to work for days and nights with crews of only 2 men, in order that fire power of some sort could be obtained at critical points.

"The enemy was easily checked by fire and as a rule did not try to advance under machine gun fire until the machine guns had been outflanked.

"Even though the Infantry were sometimes unable to fire a shot through lack of rifles and ammunition, or to being on the move, great difficulty was experienced in pressing them into service with the Machine guns for the purpose of carrying ammunition or loading belts. In a few days, however, it became apparent that the only practicable fire power available was that of machine guns, and this difficulty was then overcome, the men falling to and helping without orders. In a few instances the Infantry officers showed knowledge of the importance of keeping the machine guns in action and helped without being asked. In the majority of cases, however, they showed a complete lack of understanding as to the role of machine guns in defensive action.

"Groups of machine guns in echelon at visible distances, and in contact with one another would have undoubtedly checked the advance of the enemy providing such guns, whether on a large or small front, were well protected on the flanks. Outflanking of machine gun positions was a special feature of the enemy advance.

"The following tactics in a fight of the above nature would give the best results, both as regards the checking of the enemy advance and economy in man power:-

- (i) "A thin line of Lewis Guns in front with small Infantry escort.
- (ii) "Vickers Guns in groups, in echelon extending from 500 to 1000 yards. In rear of the Lewis Gun line, with small Infantry escort.
- (iii) "A strong line of Infantry a few hundred yards in rear of the Vickers Gun line, well rested and fresh for vigorous counter-attacks.

2. Technical.

"In mobile fighting of this nature as distinct from fighting in battery positions, the following equipment was found to adequately meet all requirements.

- (a) "Gun and Tripod.

"Mark IV Tripod whenever possible, with a light tripod always attached.

"Early in the battle it became evident that the heavy Mark IV tripod would have to be discarded owing to the number of available men per gun, the mobile nature of the fighting and the necessity of carrying as much ammunition as possible. All guns were therefore fitted with the auxiliary tripod, which gave good service, but not as satisfactory as could be desired. For point blank firing without special aiming it served the purpose as a rest for the gun, but if accurate shooting had been required it would have failed. As it was, however, the target presented were so dense that no real aiming was required.

- (b) "One First Aid Kit per Gun.

"All Guns worked remarkably well, stoppages being generally due to defective or dirty ammunition, not to breakages in the gun.

- (c) "One Second Aid Kit (Oil Kit) per 2 Guns.

"This should be carried by the Sergeant or Corporal, who should be trained to take advantage of any lull in the fighting to see that gunners "oil up."

- (d) "No gun water need be carried, except in stationary positions. The gunners should fill with water wherever possible.
- (e) "No spare barrels are required with the gun. They should be kept at some central headquarters to be available when required. The actual amount of firing is not so great as to warrant this extra load.
- (f) "Each gunner to carry, if possible, four 50-round belts empty as an emergency supply, which can be filled from ammunition picked up from casualties.
- (g) "Each gunner including N.C.O.s but excluding Nos. 1 and 2 on the guns, to carry in the initial stages of the battle 2 loaded belt boxes.

- (h) "Condenser tube always to be carried. No condenser bag is needed, but the end of the tube should be buried in the ground.
- (i) "Chinometers very necessary at the rate of at least one to every two guns.
- (j) "Compasses as now laid down, each officer to carry one. These should be liquid compasses. Other kinds are too slow for this kind of fighting, as they force the observer to expose himself for too long a period.
- (k) "Field glasses must be carried by every officer and at least one N.C.O. for every two guns. A more powerful kind that at present issued would be a decided advantage.
- (l) "The entrenching tool now carried by our gunners is too slow and was found of no value in hard ground. It is recommended that a small spade, such as is carried by the French machine gunners be supplied at the rate of one per gun. Such spades were picked up by our men on the battlefield and used in preference to our own entrenching tools.

"Short-handled shovels as used by the tunnellers would also answer the purpose."

CANADIAN MOTOR MACHINE GUN UNITS : APRIL 11TH, 1918, TO JULY 30TH, 1918.

The 1st C.M.M.G.B. and the Borden, Eaton and Yukon Batteries spent the time between April 10th, and June 8th, 1918, in cleaning and overhauling their fighting Equipment and Transport, in Machine Gun Training, in Infantry and Physical Drill, and on games and sports. On the latter date, the 2nd Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigade was organized and the Borden, Eaton and Yukon Batteries ceased to be Administrative Units on being absorbed by the 1st and 2nd Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigades.⁹⁶ On June 7th, 1918, the Eaton and Yukon batteries moved from VERDREL to OLHAIN taking over the Billets occupied by the 18th Canadian Machine Gun Company, which moved to VERDREL. On June 13th, the Headquarters and 5 Batteries of the 2nd C.M.M.G.B. concentrated at DIVION.

The 1st and 2nd Canadian Motor Machine Gun Brigades spent the period June 8th-July 30th in General Machine Gun and Infantry Training, in Overhead, Indirect and Barrage Machine Gun instruction and drill, and in carrying out Tactical Exercises. On July 14th, the 1st C.M.M.G.B. moved from its Camp at VERDREL to Billets in TILLOY-les-HERMAVILLE and on the 15th, the 2nd C.M.M.G.B. moved from DIVION to HERMAVILLE. Both Units remained in these locations until July 30th, 1918, when they proceeded to the FOURTH ARMY Area on the AMIENS Front.

⁹⁶ For detail of Reorganisation see Part I, pages 176, ff.

AMIENS.

JULY 30TH to AUGUST 25TH, 1918.

INTRODUCTORY.

General Plans for Allied SOMME Offensive.

While the Canadian Corps was holding the Line astride the RIVER SCARPE, in the second fortnight of July, 1918, events were taking place on other portions of the Front which presaged the final victory of the Allies in the Field. On July 15th, the enemy launched 2 powerful Attacks, one E. and one W. of RHEIMS. Some progress was made S.W. of RHEIMS, but both Attacks were contained and overwhelming losses inflicted on the Germans. On July 18th, the Allied Counter-offensive was launched, and, on July 26th, the Germans, with their Right Flank in danger and the Communications of the Crown Prince's Armies threatened, ordered the withdrawal from the MARNE Salient to the RIVER AISNE.

The success of these Operations created a Tactical situation which enabled Marshal FOCH to continue the Offensive elsewhere. Plans were soon matured for an Attack on the SOMME Salient, with the object of freeing the AMIENS-PARIS Railway and ultimately straightening the Line on the whole Front of the German Offensive against AMIENS in march-April, 1918. It was then decided to use the Canadian Corps for these Operations.

On July 30th, 1918, the Corps was disposed as follows:-

Corps H.Q. was at DUISANS. The First and Fourth Divisions were holding the Line E. of ARRAS, from NEUVILLE-VITASSE to OPPY; the Second Canadian Division was in G.H.Q. Reserve in the LE CAUROY Area, 15 miles W. of ARRAS; the Third Division was in G.H.Q. Reserve in the HERMAVILLE Area, 8 miles W. of ARRAS.

Canadian Corps Moves South.

The move of the Canadian Corps to the AMIENS Area began on July 30th, when Corps H.Q. handed over to XVII Corps and move to MOLLIENS-VIDAME, 40 miles S.-W. of ARRAS and 10 miles W. of AMIENS. The move of the 2 Divisions in Reserve to the AMIENS Area began the same day. Second Divisional H.Q. moved to FOURDRINOY, 8 miles W. of AMIENS, on the 30th, and to CAVILLON, 1 mile W. of FOURDRINOY, on the following day. Third Divisional H.Q. moved to BOUQUEMAISON, 4 miles N. of DOULLENS, on the 30th, and to HORNOY, 17 miles W. of AMIENS on the 31st. The First and Fourth Divisions were relieved in the Line on the nights July 31st/August 1st and August 1st/2nd, by the Fifty-sixth, Fifty-seventh and Fifty-second Divisions, XVII Corps. Relief was completed by daylight on August 2nd. Upon Relief the First and Fourth Divisions proceeded to the AMIENS Concentration Area. First Divisional H.Q. moved to HORNOY on AUGUST 3rd; Fourth Divisional H.Q. moved to HALLENCOURT, 20 miles N.-W. of AMIENS, on the same day.

Secrecy Maintained.

Every effort was made to preserve the utmost secrecy regarding the move to the FOURTH ARMY Area. Certain ruses were employed to mislead our Troops as to their destination until the move was actually under way. The FIRST ARMY Order, detailing the Relief of the Canadian Corps by the XVII Corps on the ARRAS Front, stated that the Canadian Corps would be prepared to move to the SECOND ARMY which was then holding the Section of the British front to the N. of the FIRST ARMY. This Order was published on July 29th. In order further to spread a belief among our Troops that a move N. was impending, the 27th C.I.Bn. from the Second Division, and the 4th C.M.R. Bn. From the Third Division, were moved N. by Strategical Train, and placed in the Line for a few days in the SECOND ARMY Area. Steps were taken to ensure, also, that the enemy received word of the presence of Canadian Troops on the SECOND ARMY Front.

The Intention of the move S. was kept from the Lower Command until the move was completed. The actual Corps letter, giving to Divisions their first intimation of the move, made no mention of the intended Operations. The letter stated that, on transfer to the FOURTH ARMY, the Canadian Corps would be held in G.H.Q. Reserve, and be prepared, in case of Attack, to support either the French FIRST ARMY or the British FOURTH ARMY, or to move S. at short notice, to assist the French on the RHEIMS-SOISONS

Front.⁹⁷ The move itself took place under conditions of the greatest possible secrecy. Troops entrained or embussed and detrained or debussed under cover of darkness. Brigades moved under sealed Orders. The large tracts of wooded country in the Area of Concentration made easier the concealment of our Troops from observation by hostile Aeroplanes.

Second and Third Bns., C.M.G.C., move South.

The moves S. of the 4 M.G. Battalions corresponded with the moves of the Divisions, The Second and Third Battalions, C.M.G.C., in G.H.Q. Reserve with their respective Divisions, were the first to move to the AMIENS Concentration Area. The First and Fourth Battalions made the journey after being relieved, in the Line, by British M.G. Units.

The Second Battalion (Lt.-Col. WEIR, M.C.) was billeted at LIENCOURT and the neighbouring village of DENIER (No. 2 Coy.). At 1.30 A.M., July 30th, Orders were received for the move to the FOURTH ARMY. At 9 P.M., the same day, the Battalion reached Billets in FERRIERES, 5 miles W. of AMIENS, Personnel of the Battalion entrained at LIGNY-ST. FLOCHÉL, detraining at LONGPRE, on the SOMME RIVER, 10 miles S.-E. of ABBEVILLE, From here the Battalion marched to Billets.

On the same day, July 30th, Companies of the Third Battalion, C.M.G.C. (Lt.-Col. MOORHOUSE), left their Billets at WALRUS (Bn. H.Q.), GOUVES (No. 1 Coy), WANQUENTIN (No. 2 Coy) and SIMENCOURT (No. 3 Coy), 4 to 6 miles W. of ARRAS, and joined their Brigade Group at POMMERA, 4 miles E. of DOULLENS. From here the Personnel proceeded on the 31st by Strategic Train to Billets at LUNATIC ASYLUM 1 mile S. of AMIENS.

The bulk of the Transport of these 2 Battalions made the journey by Road, joining their units on August 2nd. Only Transport necessary to provided Water and Rations for the Troops, during the 2 days interval, was brought with Units on the Train.

Fourth and First Bns., C.M.G.C., Move South.

The First and Fourth Battalions C.M.G.C. were relieved in the Line nights July 31st/August 1st and August 1st/2nd. The First Battalion, C.M.G.C. (Lt.-Col. WATSON, D.S.O.), was relieved by elements of the 56th and 57th M.G. Battalions (British), the Fourth Battalion C.M.G.C. (Lt.-Col. M.A. SCOTT, D.S.O.), by elements of the 52nd and 57th M.G. Battalions. Upon Relief, the First Battalion moved from "Y: Huts, DUISANS, to LIENCOURT (Bn. H.Q., No. 1 and 2 No.) and DENIER (No. 3 Coy): The Fourth M.G. Battalion H.Q. moved from MADAGASCAR CORNER, 2 miles N. of ARRAS, to HERMAVILLE; the 3 Companies joined their respective Brigade Groups for the journey S. (No. 1, 10th Bde.; No. 2, 11th Bde.; No. 3, 12th Bde.).

The Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., was in Billets in the AMIENS Area by the night of August 3rd/4th, Battalion H.Q. with Fourth Cdn. Division H.Q., at HALLENCOURT, No. 1 Company at HOCQUINCOURT, one mile W. of HALLENCOURT, Nos. 2 and 3 Companies at FORCEVILLE, 4 miles to the S.-W. Nos. 1 and 3 Companies moved by Train via ABBEVILLE; No 2 Company made the journey by Bus.

The First Battalion entrained on August 4th at LIGNY-ST. FLOCHÉL, detraining at SENARPONT, on the RIVER BRESLE, 15 miles S. of ABBEVILLE. From here the entire Battalion marched 4 miles to Billets in BEAUCHAMPS-le-VIEUX, situated on high ground between the Rivers BRESLE and LIGER, 22 miles W. of AMIENS.

The Transport of the First and Fourth Battalions made the journey S. by Train.

General Plan of Operations.

The Attack was made by the French FIRST ARMY on the Right and FOURTH ARMY on the Left with the Canadian Corps and the Australian Corps on the Right and Left, respectively. Frontages were allotted as follows, from Right to Left:-

- (a) French FIRST ARMY - MOREUIL to THIENNES (incl.)
- (b) Canadian Corps - THIENNES (excl.) to the AMIENS-NESLE Railway.
- (c) Australian Corps - AMIENS-NESLE Railway to the SOMME.

⁹⁷ Vid. Cdn. Corps letter G. 947/2522, dated July 29th, 1918.

- (d) III Corps - The Left Flank of the Australian Corps was covered by the III Corps, attacking in the direction of MARLANCOURT, with its Left on the ANCRE at VILLE-sur-CORBIE.

The Frontage of the entire Attack was approximately 20,000 yds. All Troops taking part, including the French FIRST ARMY, were under Orders of the Commander-in-chief, BRITISH ARMY. The object of the Attack was to push forward as quickly and as deeply as possible in the general Easterly direction of ROYE-CHAULNES, and so to assist the Operations of the French Forces, facing N., on the Line MONTDIDIER-NOYON.

Canadian Corps Frontage, Boundaries and Objectives.

The Canadian Corps, in the Centre of the Attack, was allotted a Frontage of 8,500 yds., extending from a point about 800 yds. S. of HORGES to the AMIENS-NESLE Railway. The Front Line crossed the RIVER LUCE about 800 yds. N.-E. of HORGES and, running almost due N., passed through the W. portion of HANGARD WOOD. From here it bore the E. joining up with the Australian Right, on the AMIENS-NESLE Railway, 1800 yds. E. of VILLERS-BRETONNEUX. The Corps Right Boundary, adjoining the French lay along the HORGES-VILLERS-aux-ERABLES Road for 2600 yds., S. of the AMIENS-ROYE Road; thence E. to the AMIENS-ROYE Road N. of MEZIERES; thence along the AMIENS-ROYE Road, inclusive to the Canadian Corps. The Left Boundary was the AMIENS-NESLE Railway inclusive to the Canadian Corps.

Three Objectives were set for the first day's Operations:-

- (a) GREEN LINE - Immediately E. of Line HAMON WOOD (on the AMIENS-ROYE Road, 2000 yds. W. of MAISON BLANCHE)-COURCELLES-MARCELCAVE.
- (b) RED LINE - E. of Line, MAISON BLANCHE-CAMPVERMONT FARM-high ground E. of GUILLAUCOURT.
- (c) BLUE DOTTED LINE - E. of le QUESNEL-CAIX-HARBONNIERES (in Australian Corps Area). This Line was wired and entrenched and had formed the outer Defences of AMIENS prior to the German Offensive in March 1918.

The average Depth of penetration to the BLUE DOTTED LINE was 14,000 yds. This Line was not regarded as a Final Objective; the Cavalry was to exploit beyond it in the direction of ROYE-CHAULNES, as soon as released by the Infantry from the BLUE DOTTED LINE.⁹⁸

The Ground.

"The greater part of our forward area consisted of bare slope exposed to enemy observation from the high ground south of the River Luce and east of Horgues; The trenches were very rudimentary.

"On the right, the River Luce, and the marshes, varying on that portion of the front from 200 to 300 yards wide, created an obstacle impassable to troops. Here the only practicable access to the jumping-off line was by the bridge and the road from Domart to Horgues - a narrow defile about 200 yards long. This was commanded absolutely from the high ground immediately to the east, and more particularly from Dodo Wood (on the Right of the AMIENS-ROYE Road, 1200 yds. E. of HORGES and MOREUIL WOOD).

"These conditions made the assembly of troops prior to the attack very difficult, while the siting of the forward field batteries was not an easy task.

"Some distance west of the front line a small number of woods, villages and sunken roads afforded a certain amount of cover from view. Gentelles Wood in particular was used very extensively for the Assembly of Tanks as well as troops.

"Opposite our front the ground consisted of a rolling plateau cut diagonally by the deep valley of the River Luce. This river flows almost due west through a strip of wooded marsh land some 300 yards wide, from which the sides of the valley rise steeply. Numerous ravines running generally north and south cut deep into the plateau, the ground between these ravines forming, as it were, tactical features difficult of access and more or less inter-supporting. Woods and copses are scattered over the area, and many compact and well built villages, surrounded by gardens and orchards, formed conspicuous landmarks. The remainder was open, unfenced farm land, partly covered with field of standing grain.

⁹⁸ Vid. Cdn. Corps L.C. Instructions No. 6, dated Aug. 7th, 1918.

"The hostile defences consisted chiefly of unconnected elements of trenches, and a vast number of machine gun posts scattered here and there, forming a fairly loose but very deep pattern."⁹⁹

Our Troops.

In addition to the 4 Canadian Divisions, the following Troops were placed at the disposal of the Corps:-

5th Squadron, R.A.F.
4th Tank Brigade.
3rd Cavalry Division.

The 1st and 2nd C.M.M.G. Brigades, the Canadian Corps Cyclists Battalion, and a Section of 6" Newton Trench Mortars were placed under the tactical command of Brig-Gen. BRUTINEL, C.M.G., D.S.O., G.O.C., Canadian M.G. Corps; this Group of Units was named the Canadian Independent Force.

The Corps Commander was notified that 2 British Divisions were held in ARMY Reserve, and could be made available if required, as the Situation developed.

The Artillery operating under the Canadian Corps consisted of 17 Brigades of Field Artillery, 9 Brigades of Heavy Artillery, and 4 additional Batteries of long-range Guns.

Battle Order of Divisions.

The Order of Battle of Divisions was as follows:-

Left.	Centre.	Right.
Second Canadian Division.	First Canadian Division.	Third Canadian Division.
	In Corps Reserve.	
	Fourth Canadian Division.	

Tasks.

The Task of the First, Second and Third Canadian Divisions, on the first day, was to capture and hold the RED LINE, except on the Left of the Second Division Front, where the Task included the Capture and holding of the BLUE LINE. It was laid down that if the First and Second Divisions had sufficient Troops available on completion of their Tasks on the first day, these Troops should go forward to relieve the Cavalry in, or assist the Cavalry in capturing those portions of the BLUE DOTTED LINE within their own Boundaries. The Task of the Fourth Canadian Division was to advance at Zero, following the First and Third Canadian Divisions, pass through them on the RED LINE, and relieve the Cavalry in or assist them in capturing the BLUE DOTTED LINE, from the AMIENS-ROYE Road to CAIX.

The Task of the Third Cavalry Division, with Whippet Tanks, was to follow up the Advance of the First and Second Canadian Divisions to the RED LINE, to pass through the Infantry here, and proceed to capture and hold the BLUE DOTTED LINE, Northwards from the AMIENS-ROYE Road. They were to exploit their success E. of the BLUE DOTTED LINE.

The Canadian Independent Force was given the Task of co-operating with the Third Cavalry Division along the AMIENS-ROYE Road, passing through the Third Canadian Division and making good the line of the AMIENS-ROYE Road between the RED LINE and the BLUE DOTTED LINE, thereby forming a Flank to the Third Canadian Division. The Independent Force was to exploit success down the AMIENS-ROYE Road.¹⁰⁰

1 Battalion of Fighting tanks was allotted to each Division to go forward with the Infantry. Fighting Tanks were to go through to the Final Objective, assisting the Infantry at each stage. It was arranged that the Tanks operating with the Fourth Division should precede the Infantry to the BLUE DOTTED LINE where they were to assist the Cavalry until the Infantry came up. Each of these Tanks was to carry 1 Vickers and 2 Lewis Gun Detachments, complete with Crews and Ammunition.

A dense Artillery Barrage was provided as far as the GREEN LINE, where all Barrages ceased. Heavy Artillery were employed to support the Attack as long as possible beyond the GREEN LINE by engaging

⁹⁹ Report of the Ministry, O.M.F.C., 1918, p.135.

¹⁰⁰ For the Operations of the Cdn. Ind. Force see Pages 544 ff.

special Strong Points of Localities. Field and Heavy Artillery Detachments were detailed to advance in close support of the Attacking Infantry.¹⁰¹

No co-ordinated Machine Gun Barrage was provided for the whole Corps Frontage of Attack. It was left to Divisions to arrange any M.G. Barrages required within their own Boundaries. 2 Batteries, 16 Guns, of the Second Battalion, and 1 Company, 32 Guns, of the Third battalion were employed for Barrage on their own Divisional Frontages, at the commencement of the Attack.

34 Guns and Crews of the Fourth Battalion were sent forward in mark V Tanks, in advance of the Infantry, to assist the Cavalry on the BLUE DOTTED LINE.

The remaining Machine Guns in each Division co-operated, in the usual way, with the Infantry. Generally speaking, a Machine Gun Company operated with an Infantry Brigade, each battery of 8 Machine Guns fighting, in close Liaison, with a Battalion of Infantry. A portion of the Machine Guns of each M.G. Battalion were held in Divisional reserve to meet eventualities.

Officers commanding M.G. Battalions were instructed to make the fullest possible use of their 1st Line Transport, particularly in the case of Batteries accompanying Infantry detailed to go beyond the GREEN LINE. Hand-carrying of Guns and Ammunition was reduced to a minimum.¹⁰²

Assembly of Infantry.

Upon arrival in FOURTH ARMY Concentration Area, Units began to move forward to the Battle Area S. and S.-E. of AMIENS. By the night of August 6th/7th, the Canadian Corps was concentrated in the Area between BOVES WOOD, (immediately W. of the junction of the AVRE and NOYE Rivers) and AMIENS. During the night August 7th/8th, our Troops moved to their Assembly Positions. The G.O.C. Canadian Corps had taken over command of the Battle Front from the 4th Australian Division at 10.00 A.M. August 5th, and the Australia troops in the Rear portions of the Area were relieved during hours of darkness on the 4th, 5th and 6th. In order to prevent the enemy from obtaining possible identifications, the relief of the Front Line by our Troops did not take place until the night August 7th/8th prior to the Attack.

Green Line Assaulting Troops.

When the relief was completed the Battle Order of Divisions and Brigades from Right to Left of the Corps Frontage was as follows:-

Third Cdn. Division	9th C.I.B.	43rd C.I.Bn. 116th C.I.Bn. 58th C.I.Bn. 1st C.M.R.
	8th C.I.B.	
	3rd C.I.B.	16th C.I.Bn. 13th C.I.Bn. 14th C.I.Bn.
First Cdn. Division		
Second Cdn. Division	4th C.I.B.	18th C.I.Bn. 19th C.I.Bn.

The Objective of these Troops, was the Capture of the GREEN LINE, with the help, if necessary, of Support and Reserve Battalions.

Brigades in Support were to move up and leap-frog the Attacking Brigades and pass on to the Capture of the RED LINE. If Brigades, in Reserve at Zero Hour, were still unengaged at the RED LINE, they were to pass through to the BLUE DOTTED LINE. The Fourth Division, in Corps Reserve at the outset, was to move up in Rear of the Third Division, pass through the 7th C.I.B. on the RED LINE, and on to the BLUE DOTTED LINE, timing the Advance from the Assembly Area, N. and W. of GENTELLES WOOD to conform with the progress of the leading Divisions.

¹⁰¹ Cdn. Corps L.C. Instructions No. 1, dated Aug. 3rd, 1918.

¹⁰² Cdn. Corps L.C. Instructions No. 2, Para 11, dated Aug. 4th, 1918.

Assembly and Tasks of M.G. Battalions.

Machine Guns Units assembled night August 7th/8th according to the Tasks to which individual Companies or Batteries had been assigned. Batteries and Companies operating closely with Infantry Brigades assembled with those Brigades; Units assigned to Barrage work took up their Positions prior to Zero; Guns co-operating with tanks moved up to their Jumping-off places each Gun and Crew with its own Tank.

1 Batteries of the Third Battalion, C.M.G.C. (Lt.-Col. MOORHOUSE), were allotted to the GREEN LINE attacking Brigade, viz. "G" Battery, to the 9th C.I.B. on the Right and "C" Battery, to the 8th C.I.B. on the Left. 4 Batteries, viz., "A", "B", "E" and "F", joined the 7th C.I.B. for the Attack on the RED LINE, 2 Batteries, viz., "D" and "H" were held in Divisional Reserve. The remaining 4 Batteries of the Battalion, comprising No. 3 Company (Major Galt, M.C.), were detailed to fire a primary Barrage in support of the 9th C.I.B. from Zero to Zero plus 60 minutes, after which they were to come into Divisional Reserve.

Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Companies of the First Battalion, C.M.G.C. (Lt.-Col. WATSON, D.S.O.), co-operated with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd C.I.B.s, respectively. One Battery from each Company ("C", "F" and "J") was held in Divisional Reserve. Under this arrangement, No. 3 Company (Major GRANTHAM, M.C.), less one Battery, was to support the GREEN LINE Attack, No. 1 Company (Major E.R. MORRIS), less one Battery, the RED LINE Attack, and No. 2 Company (Major DENHOLM, D.C.M.), less one Battery, the BLUE DOTTED LINE Attack. When the GREEN LINE had been established, No. 3 Company was to reassemble and come into Divisional Reserve.

The 3 Companies of the Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., were detailed to operate with the 3 Infantry Brigades of the Second Division, No. 3 Company (Major McCAMUS), with the 4th C.I.B., for the GREEN LINE Attack, No. 1 Company (Major BASEVI), with the 5th C.I.B., for the RED LINE Attack, and No. 2 Company (Major McCORKELL), with the 6th C.I.B., for the Advance to the BLUE DOTTED LINE. "J" & "K" Batteries (No. 3 Company) were detailed to bring indirect Fire to bear upon enemy Strong Points during the initial Attack, and on completion of their Barrage Task, were to be prepared to move forward as the Tactical Situation might require.

The Machine Guns of the Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., had a varied role. 2 Batteries of No. 2 Company were assigned to Infantry Brigades attacking the BLUE DOTTED LINE, viz., "F" Battery to the 11th C.I.B. (Right) and "H" Battery to the 12th C.I.B. (Left). No. 1 Battery (Major Britton), with 2 Batteries less 2 Guns of No. 2 Company, was in Divisional Reserve under Major BRITOON. These Reserve Guns were to move forward in Rear of the 10th C.I.B. and occupy Defensive Positions, by Batteries, between CAIX and the AMIENS-ROYE Road about 2500 yds. behind the BLUE DOTTED LINE.

Tank Guns, Fourth Bn., C.M.G.C.

No. 3 Company (a/O.C., Capt. W.G. WILLIAMS), Fourth Bn., C.M.G.C., with 2 Guns from No. 2 Company (Major L.F. PEARCE, M.C.), co-operated with Tanks. The Guns joined the 1st Battalion Tank Corps on August 5th at HEBECOURT, 5 miles S. of AMIENS, and were distributed one to each of 34 Tanks. On August 6th and 7th, the Personnel was given instructions in the Operation of Tanks and had some experience of travelling inside them. In addition to Tank Personnel, each Tank carried 1 Vickers Gun, with a Crew of 1 N.C.O. and 4 Men; 2 Lewis Guns with a Crew of 3 Men each; one Officer (Infantry or Machine Gun), one Runner and one Scout; the Scout to be under Orders of the Tank Officer. Besides its own necessary Stores, each Tank carried 16 M.G. Belts, 88 Lewis Gun Pans, and 9,000 Rounds S.A.A. in bulk. 8 Runners and all Vickers Gun Crews were supplied by the Fourth battalion, C.M.G.C.

The Tanks were to proceed to the BLUE DOTTED LINE, where the Guns were to be deposited with a view to cutting off the Enemy from the Rear and consolidating on this Line. Upon the arrival of our Infantry on the BLUE DOTTED LINE the Guns were to come under the command of the Brigade Commander in whose Area they were situated. Sign-boards were made, consisting of a yellow Maple Leaf on a white back-ground, to denote the Gun Positions to our advancing Infantry. These Boards were to be placed so as to be visible from the Rear only. When the BLUE DOTTED LINE had been consolidated, these "Tank" Guns were to be withdrawn from the Final Objective and disposed, by Batteries, for the Defence in Depth of the captured ground.

Location of Divl. and M.G. Bns. Hdqrs.

Divisional H.Q. were established as follows on August 7th:-

- Third Division - QUARRY, DOMART, on the W. edge of the Village.
- First Division - GENTELLES WOOD, at the W. end of the Wood, beside the ROYE Road.
- Second Division - 1000 yds. W. of BOIS de BLANCY.
- Fourth Division - Dugouts, just E. of GENTELLES WOOD.

The Officers Commanding Machine Gun Battalions had their Headquarters at the H.Q. of their Respective Divisions. As the Attack progressed Divisional Headquarters moved forward to enable Communication to be maintained with the leading Brigades.

OPERATIONS, AUGUST 8th, 1918.

Weather.

The weather was fine and warm. Prior to Zero Hour a thick mist developed which continued for some hours. Although this condition made it difficult for our Troops to maintain Direction and Liaison, the advantages out-weighed these disadvantages. The mist deprived the enemy of observation over the ground to be captured, and so greatly reduced the effectiveness of his Machine Gun Defences sited on commanding Positions of the RIVER LUCE.

Progress of Attack.

The Attack was delivered at 4.20 A.M., August 8th, and proceeded satisfactorily from the outset. The Germans were taken completely by surprise. By the afternoon all Canadian Corps Objectives had been taken with the exception of a few hundred yds. of the BLUE DOTTED LINE, on the Right, in the vicinity of le QUESNEL. This was made good early the following morning. The Canadian Corps penetrated to a maximum depth of over 8 miles, capturing 12 Villages. By 6.00 P.M., 60 Officers and 3725 Other Ranks, Prisoners, had passed through the Corps Cage.

Third "Battalion" C.M.G.C., Green Line.

The First Objective or GREEN Line, was captured in good time. The 9th C.I.B. (Third Cdn. Div.) attacked on the Corps Right in Liaison with the French. The German Barrage came down about 5 minutes after Zero Hour, but was rather scattered and not extraordinarily heavy. The Bridge over the LUCE at DOMART received a good deal of attention. The most difficult Task of the 9th C.I.B. was the ... of the DODO WOOD, situated on high ground S. of the AMIENS-ROYE Road and strongly defended by Machine Guns. This formidable Feature was taken by a Flanking Movement, from the N., carried out by the 43rd C.I.Bn". Heavy Fighting took place in the Wood, and it was not until 7.30 A.M. that it was completely cleared of enemy Machine Gun Nests. By 8.30 A.M., the 9th C.I.B. was passing through to the RED LINE.

"G" Battery, Third Battalion, C.M.G.C., assembled with the 43rd C.I.Bn. S. of the River LUCE in the vicinity of HORGES. The Guns were taken forward at Zero Hour and little opposition was encountered in reaching their Positions. Guns were sited for Defence in Depth, 6 Guns were placed E. of the DEMUIN-MOREUIL Road, 4 Guns, S. of the AMIENS-ROYE Road, and 2, N. of it, close to the DEMUIN-MOREUIL Cross-Roads. The remaining 2 Guns of the Battery were placed on the Eastern edge of DODO WOOD.

No. 3 Company, Third Bn., C.M.G.C., supported the 9th C.I.B. Attack, firing an intense Creeping Barrage on DODO WOOD from Zero to Zero plus 60 minutes. The Company suffered 7 Casualties, 1 Other Rank, killed, and 6 Other Ranks, wounded. All 32 Guns of the Company were used for the Barrage, and, on completion of their Task, came into Divisional Reserve.

The Centre and Left Battalions of the 9th C.I.B. had a less difficult Task. At 6.00 A.M., the enemy made a stand along the Road between DODO WOOD and HANGARD, but the 116th C.I.Bn turned the Position and continued the advance to the GREEN LINE. DEMUIN fell to the 58th C.I.Bn. on the Left, at 6.10 A.M.

Meantime the 8th C.I.B. (Third Division) had been advancing N. of the LUCE with the 1st C.M.R. Bn. And moved off at Zero Hour. A Gap between the 1st C.M.R. Bn. And the 16th C.I.Bn. on the Left was filled by this Battery, which moved forward in line with the First Wave. At the German Front Line, 65 Prisoners, were captured together with 3 Heavy and 2 Light Machine Guns. The Prisoners were handed over to the 16th C.I.Bn. The Battery advanced 2000 yds. E. of the old German Front Line, eventually

coming into Action in commanding Positions 1500 yds. N. of DEMUIN. During the Advance, enemy opposition, encountered in WREN COPSE, 500 yds. N. of HANGARD, was successfully overcome. Owing to the thick ground mist which prevented observation, it was found impossible for the Battery to carry out its Task of giving Covering Fire for the 9th C.I.B. Attack on DEMUIN. When DEMUIN had been taken, "C" Battery Guns were moved across the LUCE to GREEN LINE Consolidation Positions S. of DEMUIN.

First Battalion C.M.G.C. GREEN LINE.

The 3rd C.I.B. (First Cdn. Div.), in the Centre of the Corps Attack, made rapid progress. No. 3 Company, First Battalion, C.M.G.C., supported the Attack. "K", "L" and "M" Batteries advanced with the Infantry; "J" Battery was in Divisional Reserve. The 16th C.I.Bn., on the Brigade Right, arrived at the GREEN LINE on time. The first strong Resistance was encountered at the Road Junction 500 yds. N. of DEMUIN. This was overcome and the enemy were gradually pushed back along the Ridge, leaving many Machine Guns and dead behind. In a Quarry close to the GREEN LINE, 500 yds. N.-W. of HAPPALENE, a German Regimental Commander was captured with his entire Staff.

"K" Battery, First Bn., C.M.G.C., supporting the 16th C.I.Bn., moved off at 4.25 A.M. Capt. SKINNER, in command of the Battery, had his Guns go forward in pairs, in Diamond Formation, about 200 yds. behind the Infantry. The Battery moved steadily forward encountering little Opposition and Suffering few Casualties. Positions previously selected were reached and occupied at 7.15 A.M. These Positions were located on the high ground to the W. of the MARCELCAVE-DEMUIN Road, 700 yds. N.-W. of AUBERCOURT. All Guns were mounted to cover Infantry Consolidation of the GREEN LINE.

The 13th C.I.Bn. in the Centre of the 3rd C.I.B., met with considerable Resistance in HANGARD WOOD WEST. HANGARD WOOD EAST was encircled by the leading Companies, and mopped up by the rear Company and Tanks. The stoutest Fighting took place at CROATES TRENCH which protected several German Batteries in Action in PANTALOON RAVINE, 500 yds. N.-W. of AUBERCOURT. The German Defences were over-run and the Batteries Captured with their Crews. The GREEN LINE was reached on time.

"M" Battery, First Bn., C.M.G.C. commanded by Capt. BOWLES, supported the 13th C.I.Bn. The O.C., Battery, who was accompanying the O.C. 13th Bn., was wounded within a few minutes after jumping off, and Lieut. MARTIN assumed command. The Battery encircled HANGARD WOOD EAST, one Section (4 Guns) skirting the Northern, and one Section the Southern Limit of the Wood. Some Opposition was encountered from M.G. Nests which had been overlooked by the Infantry in the Fog. These were disposed of at close quarters, 15 Prisoners being captured by one Section and sent to the Rear. A Pocket of Germans was dealt with by the Left Section in the Sunken Road between the E. and W. portions of HANGARD WOOD. It was found necessary to bring one Gun into Action against this Strong Point.

Direct Overhead Fire.

After encircling HANGARD WOOD EAST, the Sections advanced, at an Interval of 800 yds., to commanding Positions 300 yds. W. of the DEMUIN-VILLERS-BRETONNEUX Road. The 13th and 14th C.I.Bns. were at this time climbing the Spur, 1000 yds. away, S.-E. of MORGEMONT WOOD, in their Attack on CROATES TRENCH, sited near the Crest of this Spur. Both Sections of "M" Battery came into Action immediately with Direct Overhead Fire, and materially assisted the Infantry Advance. On completing this Task, the Sections moved to Positions 2500 yds. to the E. 4 Guns were mounted at the Head of PANTALOON RAVINE, and 4 Guns on the SPUR to the E. of it. Here the Guns remained in Action, firing on parties of retreating Germans, till their Fire was masked by our Infantry. Positions were eventually occupied for Defence in Depth of the GREEN LINE.

The 14th C.I.Bn., on the 3rd Brigade Left, pushed forward rapidly after crossing the German Front Line. In MORGEMONT WOOD, a Nest of Machine Guns gave trouble. This Strong Point was encircled and left to be dealt with by Supporting Troops. Heavy Fighting occurred at CROATES TRENCH, but, from this point on, the Advance to the GREEN LINE met with very little Resistance.

"L" Battery, First Bn., C.M.G.C., under Capt. PARKER, operated with the 14th C.I.Bn., moving forward in diamond Formation about 300 yds. in Rear of the Battalion. Machine Gun Nests, passed over in the mist, by the Infantry, were encountered. One of these, containing 5 M.G.s, was successfully assaulted. One Section (4 Guns) fired on the Strong Point, while the other Section, with Bombs, attacked from a Flank, killing all the occupants. 1000 yds. E of MORGEMONT WOOD, another Strong Point, containing a number of enemy Machine Guns, was engaged by the Right Section at a Range of 200 yds. Finding the enemy still continued firing from this Strong Point, the Section moved to a Flank; 2 Guns

gave Enfilade Fire while the Crews of the other 2 Guns bombed out the Germans. GREEN LINE Defence Positions were eventually occupied by "L" Battery.

Thus, when the leading Infantry of the 1st C.I.B. were passing forward to the Capture of the RED LINE, the 32 Machine Guns of No. 3 Company, First Bn., C.M.G.C., were disposed in Depth on the high ground N. of the LUCE, for the Defence of the Area already captured. When the RED LINE was made good the entire Company, with "A" echelon transport assembled in Divisional Reserve in PANTALOOM RAVINE W. of AUBERCOURT. The Assembly was complete at 3.30 P.M. with guns cleaned, Belts filled and Limbers packed, in readiness for a move, should the Tactical Situation require it.

Second Battalion, C.M.G.C.; GREEN LINE.

The 4th C.I.B. (Second Cdn. Division), carried the GREEN LINE on the Left of the Corps Frontage in Liaison with the Australians attacking N. of the AMIENS-NESLE Railway. The Germans put down a heavy Barrage on the Assembly Area for 1 hour before Zero, causing numerous Casualties to our Troops. Both Attacking Infantry Battalions reached the GREEN LINE on time. No. 3 Company (Major McCAMUS), Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., Co-operated with the 4th C.I.B.

The 18th C.I.Bn., on the Brigade Right, advanced rapidly, moving off at Zero Hour. The first serious trouble came from the Right from German Machine Guns in MORGEMONT WOOD. After assisting the 14th C.I.Bn. (3rd C.I.B.) in overcoming these Guns, the Battalion proceeded steadily forward to the GREEN LINE. No. of CANCELETTE WOOD, 2 Batteries of German Guns were captured, in Action, and, under covering Fire from Infantry Lewis Guns and Vickers Guns brought p by No. 3 Company, Second Battalion, C.M.G.C, the CANCELETTE WOOD Ravine was taken by Assault.

"J" Battery, No. 3 Company, Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., Co-operated with the 18th C.I.Bn. This Battery moved off at Zero Hour, keeping in touch with the Infantry. During the Advance, Capt. SALISBURY, in command of the Battery, assisted by his Headquarters Personnel, captured 2 German Machine Guns, and took Prisoners 1 Officer and 10 Other Ranks. Two of his Battery Signalers were wounded while closing in on the enemy. The 2 captured Guns were immediately turned on a M.G. Strong Point which was holding up some of our Infantry to a Flank. The German Gunners at once ceased Fire and surrendered to our Infantry. The Battery Guns were mounted in their GREEN LINE DEFENCE POSITIONS, 100 yds. S. of MARCELCAVE, in time to obtain good Targets of retreating Germans. 2 Guns were placed well forward for the purpose of engaging these Targets of Opportunity. Severe Casualties were received in the Advance. 3 Guns were destroyed by enemy Fire. Lieut. BUSH suffered a sprained ankle, but continued to the Objective and remained with his Crews until evening when he had to be evacuated. 1 Other Rank was killed and 11 Other Ranks, Wounded.

The 19th C.I.Bn., attacking on the 4th Brigade Left, was delayed by a strongly-wired German Position in JAFFA TRENCH, on the Battalion Left, 500 yds. E. of the Jumping-off Line. This Strong Point was to have been dealt with by the 14th Tank Battalion, but, owing to the mist, the Tanks were not up with the Infantry. The Position was taken about 6.00 A.M. and the advance continued. At 6.30 MARCELCAVE was captured, with a large number of Prisoners, by the 19th and 21st C.I.Bns. By 7.00 A.M., the 19th C.I.Bn. was consolidating on the GREEN LINE.

"M" Battery supported the Advance of the 19th C.I.Bn. This Battery suffered the loss of Lieut. ROUGHTON, who was wounded during the enemy Shelling before Zero Hour. At 4.20 A.M., the Battery moved forward quickly and escaped the hostile Barrage. Several German Machine Gun Nests were rushed and captured by this Battery. Lieut. MacLAREN, in command of the Left Section, after leaving the Jumping-off Line, followed the AMIENS-NESLE Railway. A number of enemy Machine Guns were taken by his Gunners. One M.G. observed to be holding up a party of Infantry was rushed, single-handed, by Corporal C.J. DUFFY who attacked the Gun from the Rear, killing the 2 Germans who were firing it.

Capt. McCULLOUGH, O.C., "M" Battery, assisted by 3 Gunners, rushed 3 German M.G.s successively, during the move forward, killing the Crews. While taking the third Gun, Capt. McCULLOUGH was wounded in the arm, but carried on. A little later he was again wounded and Lieut. MacLAREN took command of the Battery. The Guns were mounted in GREEN LINE Defence Positions E. of the Northern portion of MARCELCAVE, and came into Action against retreating Germans. Casualties to "M" Battery during the Attack were, 2 Other ranks, killed, 2 Officers and 11 Other Ranks, wounded.

"K" and "L" Batteries were detailed to Fire Barrage in support of the 4th Brigade Attack. Positions were occupied during the night August 7th/8th. "K" Battery had 3 Other Ranks, killed and 1 Other Rank, wounded, prior to Zero Hour. The Targets of these Batteries were known enemy Strong Points. "K"

Battery was forced to cease Fire at Zero plus 6 minutes, and "L" Battery, at Zero plus 8 minutes by our Infantry moving in the thick mist in front of the Guns. Both Batteries were fired upon while in Action by parties of our Infantry, who mistook them for German Machine Gunners. 28,500 Rounds, S.A.A. were fired by the 16 Guns.

When the 5th C.I.B. had gone forward and made good the RED LINE, Major McCAMUS assembled No. 3 Company, with "A" Echelon Transport, in CAVE COPSE 1000 yds. W. of MARCELCAVE, where the Company remained in Divisional Reserve. The Total Casualties of this Company during the day were 3 Officers and 43 Other Ranks, of whom 11 Other Ranks were missing.

Corps Advance Continued to the RED LINE.

The Infantry Brigades and Auxiliary Units, detailed for the RED LINE Attack, had followed up close behind the GREEN LINE Assaulting Troops. At 8.20 A.M., our Protective Artillery Barrage in Front of the GREEN LINE ceased, and the Infantry and Auxiliary Services moved forward without further Barrage, to the RED LINE. The German Gun Line had been taken in the first stage so that our Men had now to contend chiefly with Rifle and Machine Gun Fire, and the Advance was more rapid on the whole Front. Owing to the speed of our Advance, Machine Guns had, in most cases, little opportunity of taking part. The Infantry overcame enemy Opposition before Machine Guns could be brought into Action.

The Assaulting RED LINE Infantry Brigades and Battalions from Right to Left were as follows:-

Third Cdn. Division -	7th C.I.B.	42nd C.I.Bn. 49th C.I.Bn.
First Cdn. Division -	1st C.I.B.	2nd C.I.Bn. 4th C.I.Bn. 3rd C.I.Bn.
Second Cdn. Division	5th C.I.B.	26th C.I.Bn. 24th C.I.Bn.

Third Bn., C.M.G.C. RED LINE.

The 7th C.I.B. (Third Cdn. Division) carried the RED LINE on the Corps Right, passing through the 9th C.I.B., with the 42nd C.I.Bn. (Right) and 49th C.I.Bn. (Left). "A", "B", "E" and "F" Batteries, Third Battalion, C.M.G.C., supported the 7th C.I.B., "B", "E" and "F" Batteries moving forward with the Infantry, and "A" Battery advancing in Rear in Brigade Reserve. The 42nd and 49th C.I.Bns. were on their Objective at 10.20 A.M.

"E" and "F" Batteries, on the Right, crossed the DOMART Bridge at 5.50 A.M., with Guns and Equipment on Pack Mules. Slight Shelling was experienced here, and a certain amount of Machine Gun Fire was encountered as the Batteries proceeded up the rising Ground toward DODO WOOD.

"F" Battery skirted the Left edge of DODO WOOD, and passing it on their Right, moved forward on a Line parallel with the AMIENS-ROYE Road and about 200 yds. to the Left of it, to Consolidation Positions. 4 Guns were sited immediately S. of the AMIENS-ROYE Road, 1500 yds. N. of VILLERS-aux-ERABLES, to protect the Right Flank. The remaining 4 Guns were placed on commanding ground E. of HAMON WOOD, firing in an Easterly direction. The Battery was in Position by 9.30 A.M.

"E" Battery, after crossing the DOMART Bridge, bore to the Left, crossed the DEMUIN-MOREUIL Road, 500 yds. S. of DEMUIN, and, following the Valley S. of DEMUIN, moved back to the Right, eventually taking up Defensive Positions on the forward Slope of Hill 102, 500 yds. in Rear of the RED LINE, and 1500 yds. N. of MAISON BLANCHE. These Guns had an excellent Field of Fire, from CLAUDE WOOD to BEAUCOURT and the Right Corps Boundary.

"B" Battery, with Guns and Equipment on Pack Mules, moved from the Assembly Area, 800 yds. E. of DOMART at 5.15 A.M., proceeding through HANGARD Village. The crossing over the LUCE at HANGARD was reached at 5.50 A.M. but was found to be impassable. The Bridge was down and had not yet been repaired. A foot-bridge was constructed. Capt. MOTHERSILL, O.C., Battery, had his Guns, S.A.A. and Gun Equipment unloaded from the Pack Animals, and carried across. The Animals were then backed up to the steep Bank of the River, pushed in and swam across. Although the passage of the River was made under considerable Shell Fire, only 2 Casualties to the Personnel and 2 to the Pack Animals were sustained. The Animals were repacked, on the S. Bank of the LUCE, and the Advance continued. While crossing the Valley S. of DEMUIN, the Battery was fired upon by an enemy Machine Gun, losing 2 Other Ranks, wounded, and one Pack Animal, killed. This Machine Gun was engaged and

the Crew killed. The Battery advanced, without further incident, to Consolidation Positions on the 7th C.I.B. Left, N. of CLAUDE WOOD, 500 yds. in Rear of the RED LINE.

"A" Battery, in Brigade Reserve, with Guns on pack Animals, crossed the DOMART Bridge in Rear of the Infantry, but, owing to the success of the Operation, this Battery did not come into Action.

With the Capture of the RED LINE, the Third Cdn. Division's Task for August 8th was accomplished. "D" and "H" Batteries, in Divisional Reserve, were not required in the Operation. "B", "C", "E", "F" and "G" Batteries remained in GREEN and RED LINE Defensive Positions throughout the remainder of the Day. No. 3 Company which had fired Barrage was now in Divisional Reserve.

First Bn., C.M.G.C., RED LINE.

The assaulting Battalions of the 1st C.I.B. (First Cdn. Division) in the Corps Centre, attacked between COURCELLES and the N. of CANCELETTE WOOD, passing through the 3rd C.I.B. on the GREEN LINE. The Objective was reached along the whole Front by 11.30 A.M. The captured ground included the village of IGNAUCOURT, taken by the 2nd C.I.Bn., and the Village of CAYEUX, taken by the 4th C.I.Bn. Considerable Machine Gun Fire was met with at LEMAIRE WOOD, at RUISSEAU WOOD, in the LUCE Valley, and on the Spur N. of CAYEUX. This Opposition was overcome by Infantry Manoeuvre, with Tank Co-operation.

No. 1 Company, First Bn., C.M.G.C. less "C" Battery in Divisional Reserve, supported the 1st C.I.B. "D" Battery supported the Attack on the Right and "A" Battery, on the Left; "B" Battery was in Brigade Reserve. During the advance of the 3rd C.I.B. to the GREEN LINE, "A" and "D" Batteries moved up from Assembly Positions to PANTALOOON RAVINE, W. of AUBERCOURT. The Guns and Equipment were brought to this point by G.S. Limber. Here the Guns were off-loaded and carried forward: the Limbered Wagons were instructed to follow on.

"A" and "D" Batteries followed the advancing Infantry in Diamond Formation, prepared at all times to assist the Infantry with Direct Overhead Fire; but, owing to the speed of Advance, and to the fact that the Infantry quickly overcame all Resistance, no opportunities presented themselves for either Battery to be of assistance in Fire Fights.

"D" Battery, under Capt. McDERMOTT, advanced along the Valley Road, N. of the LUCE. 2 Guns came into Action 800 yds. E. of AUBERCOURT, firing on enemy movement on the Spur, E. of IGNAUCOURT, during the advance of our Infantry through the Village. Crossing the LUCE at HAPPEGLENE, the Battery passed through IGNAUCOURT, and was disposed in RED LINE Defensive Positions on the Spur S. and E. of the Village.

"A" Battery, on the Left, after off-loading the Guns in PANTALOOON RAVINE, proceeded on its Task, issuing from the Head of the RAVINE and advancing due E. Capt. FERRIE, O.C. the Battery, had his Guns mounted for Action on the high ground near CANCELETTE WOOD, 1200 yds. N. of IGNAUCOURT, and again near STOVE WOOD, to the Left of the Draw, 1500 yds. N. of CAMPVERMONT FARM. In each case the Situation was cleared up before the Guns could do any Firing.

All Guns of "A" and "D" Batteries were in their final Positions soon after 12.00 Noon.

"B" Battery did not come into Action, but kept in touch with the O.C., Company (Major E.R. MORRIS) during the Advance, moving in accordance with the moves of the 1st C.I.B. Headquarters. On the Capture of the RED Line, this Battery was disposed as follows: 4 Guns, with Transport in the Draw, N. of IGNAUCOURT: 4 Guns with Transport and Battery H.Q. at HAPPEGLENE.

Second Bn., C.M.G.C.; RED LINE.

On the Corps Left the 5th C.I.B. (Second Cdn. Division), attacked the RED LINE through the 4th C.I.B. Positions on the GREEN LINE from the N. end of CANCELETTE WOOD to the AMIENS-NESLE Railway. No. 1 Company (Major BASEVI), 2nd Battalion, C.M.G.C., supported the 5th C.I.B. The Company moved up to the 5th C.I.B. Assembly Area, between CACHY and BOIS d'AQUENNE, night of August 7th/8th, with the following Transport and Equipment:-

3 Limbers (4 horses up) per Battery.

8 Guns (With Equipment including Tripods, Field Mounts, First Aid Cases) per Battery.

20 Filled Belts and Belt-Boxes per Gun.

3 Boxes Bulk S.A.A. per Guns.

4 Tins of Water per Gun.
48 Hours Rations.

In the Assembly Area the Gun Crews were accommodated in Trenches and the Limbers parked in available clear ground close by. Horses and mules were unhitched from the Limbers and hobbled. No Casualties were suffered in the Assembly Area.

At 5.20 A.M., August 8th, the 5th C.I.B. moved forward from the Assembly Area, with the 26th C.I.Bn. on the Right and the 24th C.I.Bn. on the Left. At 8.20, the leading Battalions advanced through the 4th C.I.B. The weight of enemy Opposition was encountered in BOIS de PIERRET, where a number of Guns and about 150 Prisoners were taken. SNIPE COPSE, to the S. of BOIS de PIERRET, was also the scene of hard Fighting. After these 2 Points of Resistance had been captured the German Opposition became weaker. WIENCOURT-l'EQUIPPE was taken at 9.20 A.M. and GUILLAUCOURT at 9.50, with about 100 Prisoners in each. The Assaulting Battalions pushed on and reached the RED LINE on time. The Tanks were of the greatest assistance to the Infantry in dealing with Machine Gun Nests.

In accordance with Orders issued by G.O.C. 5th C.I.B. and Major BASEVI, No. 1 Company moved off behind the Reserve Battalion of the 5th C.I.B. at 5.20 A.M. The Guns and Equipment remained on the Limbers. Batteries moved steadily ahead, disposed as follows:-

"B" Battery on the Right (26th C.I.Bn.)
"C" Battery on the Left (24th C.I.Bn.)
"D" Battery in Support.
"A" Battery in Reserve.

The leading Batteries moved up to within 600 yds. of the Assaulting Battalions.

Lieut. SAMPSON and 3 Other Ranks of "D" Battery were wounded by Machine Gun Fire during the Advance from WIENCOURT. On arrival of the leading Battalions at the RED LINE, Batteries unloaded Guns, deployed in pairs, and took up Positions for Defence in Depth of the RED LINE. The 2 forward Batteries were sited on the Spur E. of GUILLAUCOURT, in Positions close up to the RED LINE, between the point of the Spur, overlooking the LUCE, and the AMIENS-NESLE Railway. The other 2 Batteries, in Support and Reserve, respectively, were sited in Echelon of the forward Batteries, 1000 to 1500 yds. to the Rear.

After the Guns were off-loaded, the Limbers all returned to a pre-arranged rendezvous on the Northern edge of MORGEMONT WOOD where they were joined by the remainder of the Company's "A" Echelon Transport, left behind at BLANGY WOOD prior to the Assembly. The whole of "A" Echelon Transport moved, on the night August 8th/9th, to the Draw, 100 yds. S.-W. of WIENCOURT-l'EQUIPEE, in order to be conveniently near Company H.Q. and the Gun Positions. During the day Company H.Q. moved forward, by bounds, with Brigade H.Q. eventually being located for the night 8th/9th S. of BOIS de PIERRET, not far from the Company Transport.

The Total Casualties of No. 1 Company, for the day's Fighting were, 1 Other Rank, killed, 1 Officer and 4 Other ranks, wounded; 2 saddle horses were killed, 1 mule slightly wounded.

Corps Advance Continued to the BLUE DOTTED LINE.

The entire RED LINE was in our hands by Noon, August 8, and the BLUE DOTTED LINE Troops at once began moving through the RED LINE Positions.

The BLUE DOTTED LINE was attacked by the Fourth Cdn. Division on the Right, the First Cdn. Division in the Centre and the Second Cdn. Division on the Left. The Advance of the French was to continue on the Right of the Canadian Corps and that of the Australians on the Left. The Frontage of the Right Division was greatly increased for the BLUE DOTTED LINE Attack, the Fourth Division being made responsible for roughly 2/3 of the BLUE DOTTED LINE, from a point of the AMIENS-ROYE Road, 200 yds. E. of le QUESNEL, to the Valley 1500 yds. S.-E. of CAIX. The First Division attacked astride the RIVER LUCE from CAYEUX, through the Village of CAIX to the headwaters of the LUCE. The Second Division carried their Advance on, N. of the LUCE Valley with their Right in touch with the First Division and their Left along the AMIENS-NESLE Railway. The Depth of Attack, from the RED to the BLUE DOTTED LINE was 7,500 yds. on the Right and 2000 yds. on the Left.

The entire BLUE DOTTED LINE was captured by 6.00 P.M. August 8th, with the exception of a few 100 yds. on the Right and a triangle of ground surrounding le QUESNEL. This Area was made good the following morning.

Battle Order and Assembly.

Attacking Brigades and Battalions from Right to Left were as follows:-

Fourth Cdn. Division -	11th C.I.B.	54th C.I.Bn.; 75th C.I.Bn. (Support) 102nd C.I.Bn.; 87th C.I.Bn. (Reserve)
	12th C.I.B.	78th C.I.Bn.; 72nd C.I.Bn. (R. Support) 38th C.I.Bn.; 85th C.I.Bn. (L. Support)
First Cdn. Division -	2nd C.I.B.	7th C.I.Bn. 10th C.I.Bn.
Second Cdn. Division -	6th C.I.B.	28th C.I.Bn. 29th C.I.Bn.

The Third Cavalry Division and Tanks assisted in the capture of the BLUE DOTTED LINE. The 1st Tank Battalion with 34 Tanks supported the Fourth Cdn. Division. Each of these Tanks carried 2 Lewis Guns and 1 Vickers Machine Gun, with Gun Crews. The Cdn. Independent Force continued to operate along the AMIENS-ROYE Road.¹⁰³

At Zero Hour the Fourth Cdn. Division, in Corps Reserve was assembled in the dead ground N. and E. of GENTELLES WOOD, between the AMIENS-ROYE Road and the AMIENS-VILLERS-BRETONNEUX Road. The 1st Tank Battalion was assembled in Column along the N. Side of the AMIENS-ROYE Road, with its head just W. of GENTELLES WOOD. At 5.20 A.M. the leading Brigades, viz. The 11th and 12th, moved forward and began to cross the LUCE at 7.20 A.M. The crossing of the River was effected by the Infantry over several foot-bridges at DOMART and DEMUIN, and the 11th and 12th Brigades proceeded to the Jumping-off line along the Line of the MOREUIL-DEMUIN-COURCELLES Road, the 10th C.I.B. following in Rear.

Meantime the 1st Battalion Tank Corps had moved forward at Zero Hour as far as DOMART, where they at once began to dribble across the LUCE as breaks in Traffic occurred. By 8.00 A.M. all Tanks were over the River and in their Assembly Positions along the MOREUIL-DEMUIN Road.

Machine Guns assembled and moved forward with the Units or Formations with which they were co-operating "F" Battery, Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., moved with the 11th C.I.B. Group, "H" Battery, with the 12th C.I.B. Group. All Machine Guns of No. 3 Company (a/O.C. Capt. W.G. WILLIAMS) and 2 Guns of "G" Battery, No. 2 Company (Major L.F. PEARCE, M.C.), moved forward with the 1st Battalion, Tank Corps, "E" battery, the remaining Guns of "G" Battery and the whole of No. 1 Company (Major BRITTON) moved with the 10th C.I.B. Group in Divisional Reserve.

Fourth Cdn. Div. Attack on BLUE DOTTED LINE.

At 12.10 P.M. the Advance of the Fourth Division commenced. At this Hour the 11th C.I.B., on the Right, and the 12th C.I.B., on the Left, moved forward from the Jumping-off Line and passed through the 7th C.I.B. (Third Cdn. Division) on the RED LINE. They were preceded by Mounted Troops of the Third Cavalry Division, and by Tanks.

The 11th C.I.B. advanced about 200 yds. in Rear of the Tanks allotted to their Brigade Frontage. The 54th C.I.Bn., on the Right had the Task of taking BEAUCOURT. The 102nd C.I.Bn. was to capture the SUNKEN Roads, to the Left of BEAUCOURT, and BEAUCOURT WOOD. The 75th C.I.Bn. was responsible for taking le QUESNEL and the BLUE DOTTED LINE. The 87 C.I.Bn. was in Reserve.

The leading Battalions came under Machine Gun Fire from the Left Brigade Area, but advanced into BEAUCOURT into which the Cavalry had been seen to go a short time before the Arrival of the Infantry. Here they found the Cdn. Cavalry Brigade dismounted held up in Positions in the Sunken Roads E. and N.-E. of BEAUCOURT. The advance was checked here by Machine Gun Fire from the Western edge of BEAUCOURT WOOD.

The German Positions were rushed in a brilliantly daring Attack, led personally by the Officer Commanding the 54th C.I.Bn. The 102nd C.I.Bn. on the Left advanced at the same time, and, after a very stiff fight, succeeded in taking the main BEAUCOURT WOOD, capturing 159 Prisoners, numbers of Machine Guns and a quantity of Booty. By 4.30 P.M., the 102nd C.I.Bn. Line was established along the

¹⁰³ See Pages 544 ff.

Eastern Edge of BEAUCOURT WOOD, and was endeavouring to join up with the 12th C.I.B. on the Left.

In the meantime the Brigade Right was suffering severely from enemy Machine Gun Fire from FRESNOY-en-CHAUSSEE, in the French Area. The 54th C.I.Bn. was heavily fired upon in an attempt to get forward over the open ground towards le QUESNEL. The Line actually reached by the 12th C.I.B. on August 8th extended from the AMIENS-ROYE Road, 1500 yds. N.-W. and N. of le QUESNEL, to the inter-Brigade Boundary.

Le QUESNEL and the BLUE DOTTED LINE to the E. of it were taken on August 9th by the 75th C.I.Bn. on the Right and the 87th C.I.Bn. on the Left. The O.C., 75th C.I.Bn. personally led an Assault against a Nest of Machine Guns in Front of le QUESNEL, thereby enabling the Advance into the Village to be effected. The whole of the Final Objective was taken soon after Noon on August 9th.

Fourth Bn., C.M.G.C. Co-operation with 11th C.I.B.; BLUE DOTTED LINE.

"F" Battery, 4th Battalion, C.M.G.C., commanded by Lieut. PEVERLEY, M.C., co-operated with the 11th C.I.B. Major L.F. PEARCE, M.C., was Machine Gun Liaison Officer at 11th C.I.B. Headquarters. The Guns of the Battery were not operated as a Unit, but were allotted to the Assaulting Infantry Battalions as follows:-

5th C.I.Bn.	2 Guns
102nd C.I.Bn.	2 Guns
75th C.I.Bn.	4 Guns

The Brigade Commander did not therefore retain a central control over the Vickers Guns, through the M.G. Liaison Officer, but placed them at the disposal of his Battalion Commanders.

As a result of the special nature of the Engagement, the Officers Commanding the 3 Infantry Battalions, to which the Guns of the "F" Battery were attached, were themselves closely involved in the actual Fight and at times were leading. In consequence of this the Vickers guns were overlooked and were not used to cover the Infantry Advance. At no time was the Situation sufficiently clear to the M.G. Personnel in charge of the Guns, to enable them to employ covering Fire for the Infantry. Guns were placed by the O.C., Battery in Defensive Positions conforming with the Advance of the Infantry. Lieut. PEVERLEY, Officer Commanding the Battery, was wounded early in the day and evacuated.

In the early Morning of August 9th, "F" Battery Guns occupied Positions along the Sunken Road to the E. of BEAUCOURT. Later on in the day 4 Guns were moved up to the Brigade Left and placed in Position along the le QUESNEL-CAIX Road, 100 yds. N. of le QUESNEL. The other 4 Guns were placed along the le QUESNEL-FRESNOY-en CHAUSSEE Road, between le QUESNEL and the AMIENS-ROYE Road, for the Defence of the Right Flank. At the same time "E" and "G" Batteries, from Divisional Reserve, were placed in Defensive Positions between BEAUCOURT WOOD and the AMIENS-ROYE Road.

The 12th C.I.B., to the Left of the 11th C.I.B., encountered less Resistance and rapidly progresses to the Final Objective. On emerging from the PERONNE and ST. QUENTIN WOODS the leading Battalions came under heavy Fire from enemy Machine Gun Defences, on the high ground N. of BEAUCOURT WOOD, - Positions which entirely commanded the Line of Advance until the Valley S. of CAYEUX had been crossed. The O.C., 78th Bn., advancing on the Right, quickly organized an attacking Force consisting of a Company of Infantry, an 18 Pounder Battery, 4 or 5 Tanks and 6" Newton, and by the combined action of these Elements the German Defences were over-run.

The 78th C.I.Bn. continued to its Objective without further Opposition. The 72nd C.I.Bn. passed through the 78th on the Line of the le QUESNEL-CAIX Road, and went on to the BLUE DOTTED LINE. A Defensive Flank was thrown back on the Right, to the S.-E. and S. to conform with the Line reached by the 11th C.I.B. The 38th and 85th C.I.Bns. on the Brigade Left, advanced without incident to the Final Objective, the 85th C.I.Bn. establishing touch with the First Cdn. Division on the Left at the BLUE DOTTED LINE.

M.G. Co-operation with 12th C.I.B.

"H" Battery, Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., commanded by Capt. HALL, M.C., moved forward with the 12th C.I.B. The Advance was made by bounds. At each bound, Guns were sited to ensure the Defence of ground won. Capt. HALL finally placed his Guns between the Small Wood, 1500 yds. S.-W. of CAIX, and the Southern edge of CAYEUX WOOD.

Guns in Reserve; Fourth Bn., C.M.G.C.

No. 1 Company (Major BRITTON), Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., with "E" and "G" Batteries, in Divisional Reserve, moved forward in Rear of the 11th and 12th Brigades, with guns and Equipment in Limbers. Owing to the somewhat uncertain Situation, particularly on the Right Flank, all Batteries were mounted in Defensive Positions in the evening across the Fourth Division Front. Guns were sited about 2500 yds. in Rear of the Final Objective, W. of a line extending from the AMIENS-ROYE Road, through BEAUCOURT to a small Wood 1000 yds. S.-W. of CAIX, corresponding, roughly, with the Line of the MEZIERES-BEAUCOURT-CAIX Road. Batteries were in Position by 6.00 P.M. August 8th, from Right to Left as follows:-

"G" Battery	
"E" Battery	Covering 11th C.I.B.
"A" Battery	
"B" Battery	
"D" Battery	Covering 12th C.I.B.
"C" Battery	

Fourth Bn., C.M.G.C., Co-operation with Tanks; BLUE DOTTED LINE.

The 34 Guns allotted to tanks assembled under Capt. W.G. WILLIAMS, a/O.C. No. 3 Company, Fourth Bn., C.M.G.C., on night August 7th/8th, with the 1st Battalion, Tank Corps, just W. of GENTELLES WOOD. The Tank Battalion was divided into 3 Companies, "A", "B" and "C" of 11, 11 and 12 Tanks, respectively. At 12.30 A.M. August 8th, the Tanks moved forward to the Ridge S.-E. of DOMART WOOD, and commenced the Advance from here at Zero Hour. The passage of the LUCE was effected by 8.00 A.M., Capt. WILLIAMS had all Machine Gun Crews enter the Tanks before crossing the River and no Casualties occurred. On arrival at HOURS, 4 Tanks were immediately requisitioned to assist the Third Cdn. Division. The Vickers and Lewis Gun Crews were unloaded from these Tanks. The Gun Equipment was kept on board and was not recovered.

The Tanks co-operating with the 11th C.I.B., composing "A" Company, 1st Battalion, Tank Corps, went well as far as BEAUCOURT. On debouching from the low ground between BEAUCOURT and BEAUCOURT WOOD, however, they came under fire from an enemy Battery, sited W. of le QUESNEL, and all but one of the Tanks were put out of Action. One Tank assisted the 54th C.I.Bn. Attack on the W. portion of BEAUCOURT WOOD by moving along in front of the Wood, firing into it, then returning to the dead ground to the N.-W. Another Tank, with Lieut. GARDNER, Fourth Bn., C.M.G.C., got forward to the vicinity of le QUESNEL, where its Crews were deposited. The Tank was immediately surrounded and the surviving members of the Lewis and Machine Gun Crews, including Lieut. GARDNER and 2 Other Ranks of the Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., were made Prisoners. A Number of Tanks were set on fire by hostile Artillery and Machine Gun Fire, and their Crews either burned to death in the Tank or shot by the enemy in trying to escape from the burning Tanks. Of the Crews in Tanks put out of Action, those who survived were collected by Major PEARCE, Machine Gun Liaison Officer with the 11th C.I.B., and sent up to occupy Defensive Positions.

Regarding these Tank Vickers Guns and Crews, Major PEARCE reported as follows:-

"At 1.15 P.M., the 11th C.I.B. Headquarters moved forward with the intention of making its Headquarters in BEAUCOURT CHATEAU, but found that the CHATEAU had not yet been completely mopped up. A Report Centre was then established in a small wood west of BEAUCOURT.

"I went on a Reconnaissance of the Guns and found the 11th C.I.B., via "F" Battery, in the positions previously selected, that is, in front and to the flanks of BEAUCOURT. I continued my reconnaissance of the Tank Guns and found many of the Guns and Crews had become casualties, the Tanks being knocked out by anti-Tank Guns as they came over the rise in front of BEAUCOURT.

"I gathered the remnants of the Crews together, and had Lieuts. HENDERSON and EATON move them forward to the final objective. The spirit displayed by the remnants of these tank crews was splendid and there are many instances of the reckless daring with which they carried on after the remainder had been knocked out. I regret that it was impossible for me at the time to make notes of the individual cases which came to my notice.

"In all, I found 5 Guns and Crews in the 11th C.I.B. Area."¹⁰⁴

Of the 12 Tanks, of "C" Company, 1st Battalion, Tank Corps, advancing in the Centre, 6 managed to reach the BLUE DOTTED LINE, but, owing to the Right being held up, these were obliged to withdraw their detachments 1500 yds. Not all the Vickers Gun Crews got forward with these Tanks. Some had been unable to stand the heat and fumes inside the Tanks, and were unloaded with their Guns and followed on with the nearest Infantry. On the way up 4 of these Tanks assisted in clearing up Machine Gun Nests for the advance of the 78th C.I.Bn. One Tank of this Company, with its Vickers and Lewis Gun Crews, under Lieut. F.M. MACDONALD, reached the BLUE LINE ahead of the Infantry, on the Right of the 12th C.I.B. Frontage. The surviving members of the Crews got their Guns into Action and held the Position until Troops of the 72nd C.I.Bn. came up.

Action of Vickers Gun Crew with a "C" Company Tank.

Lieut. MACDONALD described the Action of this Tank as follows:-

"Our crew continued to go forward with the tank and about two hours afterwards we passed through the 58th Battalion after they had captured the Second Objective. From here we pushed forward to the Final Objective or Blue Line, with the Cavalry and ahead of the Infantry, on the Frontage of the 12th Inf. Bde. Continued machine gun fire and burst of shell fire were encountered during the remainder of the Advance. For this reason we had to travel inside the tanks almost all the way. Several of the men became weak and sickened by the gas fumes inside the tank. By using anti-gas tablets and also a solution which we had for this purpose, most of them recovered. Two, however, had to be left behind to be evacuated. The cavalry were moving forward either with us, or a little in front of us at first; but on many occasions they met with hostile machine gun fire and sustained very heavy losses.

"We also met with fire from anti-tank rifles, and a few bullets from these penetrated our tank. Slight casualties were also caused from splinters from the inside of the tank. By continued concentrated fire on the revolver loop-holes in the tank, the enemy succeeded in bursting the loop-hole frames and thereby produced casualties on my men in the tank. My tank officer was fatally wounded in the head. His N.C.O. was killed and two of the tank men were mortally wounded. One of my Lewis gun men and the scout were killed. After a direct hit on our tank, it stalled a couple of times; and on one of these occasions, which was about 2.00 P.M. when we were just to the right of the woods in ".21.d. (1000 yds. in Rear of the BLUE LINE, and 500 yds. N. of the 12th C.I.B. Right Boundary), the enemy began to rush us from the woods near by. Machine gun and rifle bullets were rapping on our tank from all sides, and our only hope was to keep our guns firing and get our tank started if possible. After a great deal of difficulty in cranking the engine, we succeeded in starting the tank again, and with our machine guns we wiped out groups of the retreating enemy. We pushed forward about 1000 yds. farther till we reached our Final Objective, where we unloaded our guns and took up positions in some unlevel ground. Our tank was hit and destroyed by a shell before we got all our ammunition or any rations out of it.

"We remained there and held our position against enemy machine gun and rifle fire until some troops of the 72nd Inf. Bn. reached us about 6.30 P.M. By this time I had only my sergeant and three men left. Shortly afterwards Brig.-Gen. McBRIEN, G.O.C. of the 12th Bde. came up and ordered me to move back and take defensive positions about 800 yds. in rear of where I was. I moved to this position in front of the Wood at approximately E.21.d.40.80. Towards morning, upon being relieved, we moved back to positions on the southern side of Caix Wood, at approximately E.7.c.60.15."

On the Left, 4 Tanks of "B" Company succeeded in reaching the BLUE DOTTED LINE, S. of CAIX at 3.30 P.M. Capt. WILLIAMS' Report on the Action of Machine Guns operating with this Company of Tanks is in part as follows:-

"I accompanied "B" Company with the remaining 7 Tanks (4 had been detailed to the Third Cdn. Division at HOURS) which eventually went forward to CAYEUX WOOD, where we were informed by the Cavalry that they were suffering heavy casualties from Machine Guns in a small

¹⁰⁴ No. 2 Company, Fourth Bn., C.M.G.C., "Notes on Attack in AMIENS Area, August 8th to 14th, 1918."

Wood at E.12.b. We therefore proceeded to the wood and engaged the enemy. Our casualties in this encounter were heavy, caused from splinters from inside of the Tanks.

"Shortly after this my tank developed engine trouble so I returned and reported to the G.O.C. 12th C.I.B. who requested one Tank to remain on the western side of CAIX Wood. I also, at his request, placed 2 Vickers and 2 Lewis Guns on the same side, at approximately E.7.c.60.15 and D.12.d.3.4.

"The balance of the Tanks proceeded to the final objective."¹⁰⁵

Action of Vickers Gun Crews with a "B" Company Tank.

Lieut. McGILLIVRAY, Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., who went forward with a "B" Company Tank, gives the following account of the Operation:-

"At Zero on the morning of the 8th of August our tank was well in front of GENTELLES WOOD and to the left of the ROYE ROAD. Close to us were the rest of the tanks which were to take part in the operation. Shortly after Zero, we moved forward in a long column. All machine gunners and most of the tank crews followed behind their respective tanks. We proceeded in this manner till close to the Village of DONART where we encountered some enemy shelling. This grew worse as we approached the bridge across the LUCE and all personnel were ordered into the tanks. We crossed the River in this manner without any casualties. In the Village itself, there was some delay, and, the shelling having increased, we moved off the road into an orchard, remaining here for about an hour with all personnel in tanks.

"We proceeded forward and, after clearing the Village, the personnel again followed the tank until level ground was reached when, owing to the increased speed of the tank, all the men had to ride inside or on top. About this time we came under long range M.G. fire which did no harm, but served to speed up our tank. Shortly after this, on coming over a ridge, we were fired on by a small field gun at very long range. This gun was evidently put out of action for after firing a few rounds it ceased all together.

"After passing through the Third Cdn. Division we came into our first real action. Our Troops were held up by M.G. Fire from -- Wood. We at once proceeded to the Wood and went into action. The fire from the enemy M.G. nest here was very heavy and came from every direction. It was aimed mainly against the doors and gun turrets of the tank. This engagement lasted 20 minutes to half an hour. We succeeded in knocking out several of the German Machine Guns but, in doing so, about our Six-Pounders and four of our Hotchkiss guns were put out of action. In the case of the Six-Pounders the telescopic sights were blown off; the Hotchkiss Guns had the Gas chambers riddled with bullets. We had done a great deal of turning and maneuvering in a small area and, owing to the tank being new, the huge treads began to loose and pound very badly. The tank officer thought it best to withdraw to dead ground, fix our sights for the Six Pounders and the chambers on the Machine Guns, and see what could be done to the treads. The repairs were effected and we were about to go into action again, when I received orders to hold CAIX Wood against a counter attack which was expected. I withdrew all the Machine Guns from the tanks and took up defensive conditions on one edge of the WOOD; the tank remained with us and formed the pivot of our defence. About dark I received orders to move forward and take up other positions as an attack was threatened at daylight or during the night. Our casualties were many but very slight, all being caused by the Metal splash from the inside of the tank while making small cuts about the face and hands."

Summary: Tank Guns and Crews.

Of the 34 Vickers Guns and Crews which went forward in the Tanks on August 8th, 4 actually reached the BLUE DOTTED LINE and came into Action against the Germans in accordance with the Plans for the Operation. 8 Tanks were set on Fire and Guns and Equipment were burned. 2 Crews were completely missing. 16 Crews were unloaded from Tanks, overcome by the unaccustomed heat and gas and cramped conditions inside the Tanks. These Crews went on with the nearest Infantry, taking what Equipment and S.A.A. they were able to carry. 4 Crews were unloaded by tanks, which went to the assistance of the Third Cdn. Division. 13 Machine Guns were destroyed or lost.

¹⁰⁵ No. 3 Company, 4th Bn., C.M.G.C., "Report on Operations in conjunction with Tanks, August 8th, 1918."

The following officers of the Fourth Battalion C.M.G.C. were in charge of Tank Vickers Gun Crews:-

Lieut. EATON	Lieut. MACDONALD (F.M.)
Lieut. GARDNER	Lieut. MCGILLIVRAY
Lieut. HAMILTON	Lieut. PATTERSON
Lieut. LORIMER	Lieut. RIDDELL (W.)

Of these Officers, Lieut. LORIMER and Lieut. HAMILTON were killed; Lieut. GARDNER was made a Prisoner.

The failure of the Tanks to get the Machine guns forward to the BLUE DOTTED LINE was ascribed to various causes.

Perhaps the chief of these was that Tanks carrying Machine Gun Crews and Guns were diverted from their main purpose. Four Tanks were taken at the outset by the Third Cdn. Division. Other 4 Tanks were employed to assist the 78th C.I.Bn. in clearing up Machine Gun Nests, 4000 yds. in Rear of the Blue Dotted Line. Much valuable time was occupied in this way and the enemy was able to bring up Anti-Tank Crews and Machine Guns to strengthen his Defences. Also by being used for these subsidiary Tasks, Tanks became separated and were unable to render one another mutual assistance. German Gunners were able to deal with them individually.

The Plans for the Operation were made hurriedly and this fact, as much as any other, accounts for the failure of the Tank Machine Guns. In the brief period of Preparations it was not sufficiently impressed upon the minds of all concerned that the chief purpose of the Tanks bearing Machine Gun Crews was to make their way through to the BLUE DOTTED LINE to deposit Machine Guns there.

Capt. WILLIAMS pays a glowing tribute to the Tank Corps Personnel in charge of Machine Gun Tanks. At the conclusion of his Report he writes:-

"I should like to add an appreciation of the work done by the Tank Officers and Crews. They showed great courage and coolness, and it was through no fault of theirs that every Machine Gun was not dumped in its place."

First Bn., C.M.G.C., BLUE DOTTED LINE.

On the Centre of the Corps Attack, the 2nd C.I.B. (First Cdn. Division) advanced rapidly through the 1st C.I.B. on the RED LINE to the Final Objective. The 7th C.I.Bn. on the Right, S. of the LUCE, jumping-off at 11.00 A.M., had to contend with isolated Machine Gun Nests, Rifle Fire and Sniping. All oppositions was overcome, the Southern portion of CAIX was captured and the Battalion reached the Final Objective at about 2.35 P.M. The entire Advance of the 7th C.I.Bn. from the Concentration Area to the Final Objective was carried out without a Casualty. The 10th C.I.Bn. advanced N. of the LUCE, meeting with Opposition from Machine Gun Nests located in Woods, Hedges and Sunken Road. All Resistance was broken down, the Northern part of the Village of CAIX was taken and the BLUE DOTTED LINE reached about 1.15 P.M.

No. 2 Company (Major DENHOLM, D.C.M.), First Battalion, C.M.G.C. less "F" battery, in Divisional Reserve, supported the 2nd C.I.B. At Zero Hour the 3 Batteries were disposed in the Brigade Assembly Area, near GENTELLES Village. At Zero plus 2 hours, the Batteries moved forward with Guns, Gun Limbers and one S.A.A. Limber each; "E" Battery (Capt. MILNER) supported the 7th C.I.Bn. on the Right; "H" Battery (Capt. MATTHEWS) supported the 10th C.I.Bn. on the Left; "G" Battery (Capt. BANKIER) operated with the 8th C.I.Bn. in Brigade Support.

Capt. MILNER's Battery did not come into Action during the Advance. From GENTELLES, the Battery moved direct to the LUCE Valley N. of DEMUIN: following the Valley Road through AUBERCOURT, it crossed the LUCE at HAPPEGLENE, and carried right on to CAIX by way of IGNAUCOURT and CAYEUX. Guns were unloaded from Limbers at 2.15 P.M. at the S.-E. edge of CAIX Village, and sited, for Defence of the final Objective, on the Brigade Right.

"H" Battery advanced from the Assembly Area, E. of GENTELLES Village, skirting the Northern edge of HANGARD WOPOD and MORGEMONT WOOD; E. of the latter, the Battery turned sharply to the S. following the Road to the Southern end of PANTALOOON RAVINE. From here it Proceeded E. along the Slope N. of the LUCE. At 10.45 A.M., Capt. MATTEWS, ordered his 2 Sections forward at the gallop under cover in RUISSEAU WOOD, 700 yds. N. of CAMPVERMONT FARM. Here the Limbers were unpacked, and one Section brought into Action in Positions on the high Ground N. of the LUCE. Effective Fire was brought to bear on enemy Machine Gun Nests in the LUCE Valley, E. of CAYEUX. 5000 Rounds S.A.A. were expended. This operation was carried out under heavy Machine Gun and Rifle

Fire. Lieut. ESSEX, who controlled the Fire of the Section, was wounded, together with 3 Other Ranks. At 11.30, the other Section pushed forward 1000 yds. and hotly engaged parties of the enemy retreating up the LUCE Valley, expending 1000 Rounds. Another bound of 1000 yds. was made to Positions from which Fire was effectively delivered on small parties of the enemy, retiring in the direction of CAIX. All Guns were eventually off-loaded from the Limbers on the North-eastern outskirts of CAIX at 2.30 P.M. and placed in BLUE DOTTED LINE Defence Positions on the Brigade Left.

"G" Battery followed the same Route as "H" Battery from the Assembly Area as far as the entrance to the Draw, N. of the LUCE, mid-way between CAYEUX and CAIX. Here the Guns were off-loaded and sited in Positions astride the River, covering the Valley W. of CAIX.

Guns in Reserve, First Bn., C.M.G.C.

"C", "F" and "J" Batteries, in First Divisional Reserve, were not used in the Operations on August 8th. At 8.30 A.M., they moved to a point beside the DOMART-VILLERS-BRETONNEUX Road, 1500 yds. N. of DOMART. Here they remained throughout the day and until 6.00 A.M. on the 9th, when they were ordered forward to MON IDEE, N. of IGNAUCOURT.

Second Bn., C.M.G.C.; BLUE DOTTED LINE.

The 6th C.I.B. advanced through the 5th C.I.B. at 4.30 P.M. The BLUE LINE was occupied without Opposition. The 9th HUSSARS had taken up a Position on the Line of a Light Railway 500 yds. in Rear of the Final Objective. This Unit was relieved as the 6th C.I.B. went through.

No. 2 Company (Major McCORKELL), Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., supported the 6th C.I.B. At 5.30 A.M., all Batteries began to move forward from their Assembly Area W. of CACHY; advancing slowly behind the Infantry, one Battery on each Flank, one in Support and one in Reserve. Each Battery took forward 4 Limbers, carrying Gun Equipment, 20 loaded Belts per Gun, Water, Oil, Spare Parts, Rations and 4 Boxes S.A.A. per Gun.

At 6.00 P.M., the forward Batteries began taking over Dispositions from the Cavalry. By 9.00 P.M., all Guns were in BLUE LINE Defensive Positions, "E" Battery on the Right, "F" Battery on the Left, "G" and "H" Batteries in Support. Casualties of No. 2 Company were 2 Other Ranks, wounded.

OPERATIONS, August 9th, 1918.

Battle Order.

The Canadian Corps, continued the Advance from the BLUE DOTTED LINE on August 9th, about mid-day. Attacking Units moved forward at slightly varying Times, between 11.00 A.M. and 2.00 P.M. The Third Cdn. Division attacked on the Right, the First Cdn. Division in the Centre, the Second Cdn. Division on the Left. The Attack was assisted by Tanks and Cavalry. The Battle Order of Attacking Infantry Brigades and Battalions from Right to Left was as follows:-

Third Cdn. Division:	8th C.I.B.	5th C.M.R. Bn. 4th C.M.R. Bn.
First Cdn. Division:	1st C.I.B.	1st C.I.Bn. 2nd C.I.Bn.
	2nd C.I.B.	5th C.I.Bn. 8th C.I.Bn.
Second Cdn. Division:	5th C.I.B.	25th C.I.Bn. 22nd C.I.Bn.
	6th C.I.B.	31st C.I.Bn. 29th C.I.Bn.

Boundaries.

Canadian Corps Boundaries remained unchanged, Viz., the AMIENS-ROYE Road on the Right, adjoining the French, and the AMIENS-NESLE Railway on the Left, in touch with the Australians. The inter-Divisional Boundaries for the BLUE DOTTED LINE of the August 8th Attack were readjusted to conform with the Frontages allotted to Divisions for the Advance on August 9th. The Third and First Cdn. Divisions attacked through the Fourth Cdn. Division. The Second Cdn. Division extended its

Frontage to the Right to include the Line held by the First Cdn. Division on the evening of August 8th, and the extreme Left of the Fourth Cdn. Division.

Objectives.

The Corps Objective was the Line of the Road from BOUCHOIR, through ROUVROY and MEHERICOURT to LINONS. The following Villages were included in the Objectives of the 3 Attacking Divisions:-

Left.	Centre.	Right.
Second Cdn. Division.	First Cdn. Division.	Third Cdn. Division.
VRELY	BEAUFORT	FOLIES
ROSIERES	WARVILLERS	BOUCHOIR
MEHARICOURT	ROUVROY	

Progress of Attack.

The Attack was made without Artillery Barrage. The average depth of our Advance during August 9th was 4½ miles, with a maximum penetration of 6½ miles. Enemy Resistance stiffened considerably and gains were made only as a result of heavy Fighting along the whole Corps Front.

Preparations of M.G. Battalions.

During the night August 8th/9th and the morning of August 9th, Officers Commanding Machine Gun Battalions made the necessary M.G. Preparations for the Advance on the 9th. The Third Battalion, C.M.G.C. (Lt.-Col. MOORHOUSE), having finished its Task at the Red Line, on August 8th, remained in the Positions occupied until the evening. During the night August 8th/9th and early morning of the 9th, Companies were assembled prepared to move at half an hour's notice after 10.00 A.M. No. 3 Company (Major GALT, M.C.) was ordered to co-operate in the Attack and assembled at 10.00 A.M. N. of the AMIENS-ROYE Road near MAISON BLANCHE, with the 8th C.I.B., ready for the Advance. Nos. 1 and 2 Companies remained in Divisional Reserve. At 9.30 A.M., Advanced Battalion H.Q. moved to VALLEY WOOD and later with the Third Cdn. Divisional H.Q. to BEAUCOURT.

The First Battalion, C.M.G.C. (Lt.-Col. WATSON, D.S.O.) supported the First Cdn. Division Attack with 2 Companies, less 2 Batteries. No. 1 Company (Major E.R. MORRIS), less "C" Battery, co-operated with the 1st C.I.B., No. 2 Company (Major DENHOLM, M.C.), less "F" Battery, co-operated with the 2nd C.I.B., No. 3 Company (Major GRANTHAM, M.C.), less "J" Battery, remained with the 3rd C.I.B. in Divisional Reserve. "C", "F" and "J" Batteries, as on the previous day, were kept as a Mobile Reserve in the hands of the G.O.C., First Cdn. Division.

Attacking Companies of the First Battalion, C.M.G.C., moved to their Assembly Areas during the morning of the 9th. - No. 1 Company (less "C" Battery) to the ground on the S.-E. edge of the BEAUCOURT WOOD, No. 2 Company (less "F" Battery) to the line of the le QUESNEL-CAIX Road, about mid-way between the 2 Villages. "G" Battery had some difficulty into its Assembly Positions on the 2nd C.I.B. Left, owing to enemy M.G. Fire from a small Wood 1500 yds. in Front, and from BEAUFORT WOOD. The Battery did not reach Positions until 5 minutes after Zero.

The Task of No. 3 Company, less "J" Battery, operating with the 3rd C.I.B., was to be prepared, in case of Attack, to defend the RED LINE of August 8th. At 9.15 A.M. on the 9th, the Company moved from AUBERCOURT to CERFS WOOD 1000 yds. S. of HAPPAGLENE, and was held in readiness here throughout the day. A reconnaissance was made of the Area between the BLUE DOTTED LINE and RED LINE, for suitable Machine Gun Positions to be manned in case of Attack. First Battalion, C.M.G.C., Headquarters opened at IGNAUCOURT, at 10.00 A.M. August 9th.

Companies of the Second Battalion, C.M.G.C. (Lt.-Col. WEIR, M.C.), continued to operate with the Brigades to which they were attached on August 9th, and moved under their orders: No.1 Company assembled with the 5th C.I.B. on the Second Cdn. Division Right, and No. 2 Company, with the 6th C.I.B. on the Divisional Left. No. 3 Company, with the 4th C.I.B. in Divisional Reserve moved to the Area S. of WIENCOURT-LEQUIPEE. Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., Headquarters had moved to PIERRET WOOD on August 8th and remained there throughout the 9th.

Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C. (Lt.-Col. M.A. SCOTT, D.S.O.), was in Corps Reserve during the August 9th Advance. All Guns of the Battalion remained in Defensive Positions occupied at the end of the First day's Operations until the 11th C.I.B. had completed the Capture of the BLUE DOTTED LINE on August 9th. When the Third and First Cdn. Divisions had passed through the Fourth Cdn. Division, in the early

afternoon of August 9th, the 10th C.I.B. relieved the 11th and 12th C.I.Bs. on the BLUE DOTTED LINE. Batteries of No. 1 Company remained in Defensive Positions with the 10th C.I.B.: Nos. 2 and 3 Companies were withdrawn and spent the remainder of the day in reorganising. The 13 Guns of No. 3 Company, destroyed on the 8th, were replaced in the early morning of the 10th. Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., Headquarters moved to DEMUIN at 1.00 P.M. August 8th, and remained there throughout the 9th.

Action of Third Bn., C.M.G.C.

The 8th C.I.B. (Third Cdn. Division) on the Corps Right advanced from its Assembly Area at Noon, the 5th C.M.R. Bn. on the Right, the 4th C.M.R. Bn. on the Left. At 2.00 P.M., the Battalions passed through the 11th C.I.B. (Fourth Cdn. Division) on the BLUE DOTTED LINE. Enemy Machine Gun Resistance was overcome with the assistance of Tanks. The stiffest Fight took place for possession of the BEETROOT FACTORY, near the Crossroads, 1000 yds. N.-W. of BOUCHOIR. This was eventually taken at 6.00 P.M. by which time the entire Objective was in our hands on the Third Division Front. The French kept well up, with our Advance on the Right Flank. Some assistance was given them by the 5th C.M.R. Bn. in the Capture of ARVILLERS.

No. 3 Company, Third Battalion, C.M.G.C., advanced under Orders of the 8th C.I.B. As soon as BOUCHOIR was captured, "K", "L" and "M" Batteries were rushed forward to assist in consolidating the Fronts and Flanks, particular attention being paid to the Right Flank where our Troops were slightly in Advance of the French. During the move forward the 3 Batteries suffered 5 Casualties from Shelling and Machine Gun Fire. "J" Battery was held in Brigade Reserve. While making a reconnaissance in the evening along with the Officer Commanding the 2nd C.M.R. Bn. and an Officer of the 5th Tank battalion, Major GALT, M.C., commanding No. 3 Company, was wounded in the hand by enemy Machine Gun Fire. On returning to Brigade H.Q. Major Galt refused to be evacuated until he had issued Orders to his Battery Commanders for a further Advance. Capt. J.H. McLEAN took over command of No. 3 Company.

Changes in machine Gun Dispositions of the Third Battalion, C.M.G.C., were made during the evening of August 9th, conforming with Infantry movements. At 7.30 P.M., No. 1 Company moved forward and took up Positions with the 7th C.I.B.; No. 2 Company remained at MAISON BLANCHE. At 10.00 P.M., the general Machine Gun Dispositions were as follows:-

No. 3 Company was with the 8th C.I.B. in Forward Positions, "J" and "K" Batteries, in front and on the Flanks of BOUCHOIR, "L" and "M" Batteries, with the 2nd C.M.R. Bn., 100 yds. in Rear of BOUCHOIR. No. 1 Company was with the 7th C.I.B. in Support Positions, "A" Battery, with the P.P.C.L.I. South of FOLIES, "E" Battery, with the 42nd C.I.Bn., N. of FOLIES, "C" and "D" Batteries, 100 yds. in Rear. No. 2 Company was with Battalion Details, at Rear Battalion headquarters, MAISON BLANCHE. Advanced Battalion H.Q. was with Third Cdn. Division H.Q. at BEAUCOURT.

Action of No. 1 Company, First Bn. C.M.G.C.

The 1st C.I.B. (First Cdn. Division) attacked at 1.15 P.M., with the 1st and 2nd Cdn. Inf. Bns. As the Attack proceeded in Advance of the 8th C.I.B. on the Right, part of the 1st C.I.Bn. turned out of its own Area and cleared the Village of FOLIES, handing it over to Third Cdn. Division Troops on their arrival. The Left of the 1st C.I.Bn. in conjunction with the 2nd C.I.Bn. cleared BEAUFORT, and the Line pressed on to the FOLIES-WARVILLERS Road. The 1st C.I.Bn. captured 50 Prisoners in a Trench 200 yds. E. of the FOLIES-WARVILLERS Road, and consolidated on this Line; the 4th C.I.Bn. passed through the 1st C.I.Bn. to continue the Attack. On emerging from BEAUFORT, the 2nd C.I.Bn. to Brigade Left, engaged a German Force forming up for a Counter-Attack along the FOLIES-WARVILLERS Road and routed it, causing severe Casualties. The 2nd C.I.Bn. pressed on, by short rushes, past MARMITES FARM, 500 yds. S. of WARVILLERS, and, assisted by 2 Tanks and a Detachment of the 11th HUSSARS, cleared the Northern part of ROUVROY. The Battalion suffered heavy Casualties from M.G. Fire in the Advance E. of MARMITES FAR. The 3rd C.I.Bn. went through the 2nd C.I.Bn. and in conjunction with the 4th C.I.Bn. captured the remainder of ROUVROY. The whole of this Village was in our hands by 9.20 P.M., and First Cdn. Division Troops were on their Final Objective all along the Line, the C.I.Bn. on the Right, the 3rd C.I.Bn. on the Left.

The Batteries of No. 1 Company (Major E.R. MORRIS) First Battalion, C.M.G.C., supported the 1st C.I.B. Attack, "A" Battery in Brigade Reserve. Company H.Q. moved forward with Brigade H.Q., being finally established in BEAUFORT at 8.30 P.M.

"B" Battery kept in close touch with the 1st C.I.Bn. during the Advance, following the Infantry with Guns in pairs, disposed in Diamond Formation. The Battery came into Action several times, firing on Enemy Points of Resistance. The first Target engaged consisted of parties of the enemy along a Line of Light Railway, 100 yds. E. of the Jumping-off Line, and to the Left of the le QUESNEL-BEAUFORT Road. When the Right Company of the 1st C.I.Bn. moved to the Right to attack FLOIES, the O.C., "B" Battery placed Guns particularly to defend this Flank until the Situation was well in hand. Covering Fire was Given to the Infantry in their advance through the Right portion of BEAUFORT, special attention being paid to the treed Area W. of the Village. From the vicinity of the FOLIES-WARVILLERS Road, Fire was brought to bear on enemy Artillery observed withdrawing S. of ROUVROY, causing Casualties to Men and horses. Final Dispositions of "B" Battery were made 200 to 500 yds. E. of the FOLIES-WARVILLERS Road.

The 8 Guns of "D" Battery supported the 2nd C.I.Bn. on the 1st C.I.B. Left. Capt. MACDERMOTT, O.C., Battery, collected his Guns on the le QUESNEL-CAIX Road and fired a Creeping Barrage of 3 Lifts to cover the Advance of the Infantry and Cavalry against BEAUFORT WOOD. Lieut. DILLON, M.C., organized the Barrage. After firing this Barrage the Guns moved forward in pairs and were eventually disposed in Defensive Positions on the 1st C.I.B. Left.

At 10.00 P.M. August 9th, "A" Battery, First Battalion, C.M.G.C., in Brigade Reserve, was moved up to strengthen the Brigade Right Flank, Guns being sited S.-E. and S. of BEAUFORT.

Action of No. 2 Company, First Bn., C.M.G.C.

The 2nd C.I.B. attacked at 1.00 P.M. with the 5th C.I.Bn. on the Right, and the 8th C.I.Bn. on the Left. The most determined Resistance was met with from HATCHET WOOD, in the centre of the 8th C.I.Bn. Frontage. The Position was captured by a brilliantly daring Assault in which a large number of Machine Guns and 500 Prisoners were taken. In the Assault, the O.C., 6th C.I.Bn., Major RADDALL, D.S.O., was killed. This gallant Officer was formerly Divisional Machine Gun Commander, First Cdn. Division, and had commanded the 2nd C.M.G. Company on its formation on January 1st, 1916.¹⁰⁶ The enemy resisted our Advance all along the 2nd C.I.B. Frontage, in determined Groups, centred around Machine Gun Nests. With the assistance of Tanks, all oppositions was overcome and our Line pushed through WARVILLERS to the ROUVROY-VRELY Road.

No. 2 Company (Major DENHOLM, D.C.M.), First Battalion, C.M.G.C., supported the 2nd C.I.B. with 3 Batteries, "E" Battery on the Right, "G" Battery on the Left, "H" Battery in Brigade Reserve.

"E" Battery had many Targets during its Advance. After advancing 1500 yds., No. 2 Section (4 Guns) fire 150 Rounds with good effect on a party of 50 Germans emerging from the Northern extremity of BEAUFORT WOOD. 500 Rounds were fired on retreating Germans 500 yds. W. of WARVILLERS and heavy Casualties were inflicted. Enemy Artillery Wagons on the ROUVROY-VRELY Road were engaged with good results from Position just N. of WARVILLERS. No. 1 Section (4 Guns) came into action against enemy Machine Guns in BEAUFORT WOOD. At one stage of the Attack Lieut. MACINTOSH took charge of elements of the 5th C.I.Bn. who had lost their Officers and, leading them forward by sectional rushes, succeeded in capturing several Prisoners. "E" Battery Guns were eventually sited for Defence along the 2nd C.I.B. Frontage, on either side of the ROUVROY-VRELY Road, 800 to 1000 yds. behind the Final Objective. Both Sections of "E" Battery had Guns mounted against enemy Air-craft when Final Dispositions had been made. Private McLEOD, of No. 2 Section, firing No. 6 Gun, brought down an enemy Aeroplane in flames, just E. of the ROUVROY-VRELY Road.

"H" Battery, in Brigade Reserve, moved forward, in Diamond Formation, with 200 yds. Interval and 600 yds. Distance between pairs, following the Reserve Infantry Battalions. Limbers accompanied the Battery, in Rear of the last pair of Guns. Previously selected Positions were occupied, 2000 to 3000 yds. in Rear of the Final Objective.

Guns in Reserve; First Bn., C.M.G.C.

No. 3 Company (Major GRANTHAM), First Battalion, C.M.G.C., did not come into Action on August 9th. The 3 Batteries attached to the 3rd C.I.B., in Divisional Reserve, remained in CERES WOOD until 7.15 P.M., when they moved to the 3rd C.I.B. Assembly Area in the low ground N. of BEAUCOURT. Here Batteries "Stood To" until 11.30 P.M. when Orders were received from 3rd C.I.B. to "Stand Down" and remain where they were for the night.

¹⁰⁶ See Part I, Page 49.

"C", "F" and "J" Batteries in Divisional Reserve were moved at Noon, August 9th, from MON IDEE to CAYEUX. At 4.30 P.M., they moved again to the Valley S. of CAYEUX, to a point mid-way between CAYEUX and BEAUCOURT.

Action of No. 1 Company, Second Bn., C.M.G.C.

The 5th C.I.B., on the Right of the Second Cdn. Division Front, attacked through a portion of the BLUE DOTTED LINE held by the 2nd C.I.B. (First Cdn. Division). The 25th C.I.Bn. was on the Right, the 22nd C.I.Bn., on the Left. As already stated, the First Cdn. Division jumped off at 1.00 P.M. The 6th C.I.B. on the Left of the 5th C.I.B. attacked at 11.00 A.M. In view of this situation and in order to give the greatest possible assistance to the flanking Brigades, the 5th C.I.B. Units launched their Assault at time which would enable their Battalions to keep pace with the Advance of Troops on their Flanks. The Left Company of the 22nd C.I.Bn. left the Jumping-off Line at 11.45 A.M., the remainder of the 22nd C.I.Bn. and the 25th C.I.Bn. attacked at 12.30 P.M.

Severe enemy Machine gun Fire was encountered as soon as Battalions left the Jumping-off Line. Enemy Nests were dealt with by Tanks and Infantry Manoeuvre. Small Parties of Scouts, followed by Lewis Guns worked up Ditches, Sunken Roads and other Dead Ground, until enemy Machine Guns were put out of Action or forced to retire by Enfilade Fire from a Flank; when this had been accomplished, for each successive M.G. Nest, a signal was given to the Infantry that they could now advance. The leading Battalions, making their way forward in this way, were E. of VRELY by 3.25 P.M., and by 5.30 P.M. had taken MEHARICOURT and were consolidating on the Final Objective, in old Trenches, about 500 yds. E. of the latter Village. At this time, the 5th C.I.B. was out of touch with Units on both Flanks; by 7.30 P.M. touch was established with the 2nd C.I.B. on the Right and the 6th C.I.B. on the Left.

No. 1 Company (Major BASEVI), Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., supported the 5th C.I.B. Attack. "A" Battery, under Capt. L.F. WHITE, M.C., operated with the 25th C.I.Bn. on the Right, "C" Battery, under Capt. HOBSON, M.C., M.M., with the 22nd C.I.Bn. on the Left. "B" and "D" Batteries moved forward in the Right and Left Rear, respectively. Company H.Q. was with Brigade H.Q. in the Orchard, S.-W. of CAIX.

Guns and Equipment were taken forward on Limbers until the Infantry had reached the Final Objective. The leading Battery Commanders at once got into touch with the Officers Commanding the respective Infantry Battalions they were supporting and Guns were placed in Position. Capt. WHITE, O.C., "A" Battery placed 4 of his Guns in Position 1000 yds. S. of MEHARICOURT to cover a Gap on the Right of the Brigade, and defend the 25th C.I.Bn. Right. The Other 4 Guns of "A" Battery were placed on commanding ground in Rear of the ROUVROY-MEHARICOURT Road, 500 yds. W. of its junction with the VRELY-MEHARICOURT Road. "C" Battery Guns were sited N. of MEHARICOURT, near the Cemetery and outskirts of the Village. "B" and "D" Battery Guns, in Support, were placed in Defensive Positions across the 5th C.I.B. Area, 1000 to 2000 yds. in Rear of MEHARICOURT. All Guns remained in Position throughout the night August 9th/10th.

No. 1 Company H.Q. moved with Brigade Headquarters to the BLUE DOTTED LINE at 2.30 P.M. and at 5.00 P.M. were established at VRELY. At about 3.00 P.M. a shell killed the Brigade Major, 5th C.I.B. and wounded the G.O.C., Brigade, and Staff Captain Intelligence. Major BASEVI, commanding No. 1 Company, being the senior Officer left, was temporarily in command at Brigade H.Q., and assisted what remained of the Brigade Staff until the Casualties were replaced. Casualties to No. 1 Company, Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., during the day's Operations, were, 2 Other Ranks, wounded.

Action of No. 2 Company, Second Bn., C.M.G.C.

The 6th C.I.B. attacked on the Corps Left, at 11.00 A.M., in conjunction with the 15th Australian Inf. Bde., Fifth Australia Division, N. of the AMIENS-NESLE Railway. Great assistance was given to the 6th C.I.B. by the 9th Cavalry Brigade in reconnaissance and supporting the Line. Considerable help was rendered also by 5 Tanks, of the 14th Tank Battalion. The Brigade attacked with the 31st C.I.Bn. on the Right and the 29th C.I.Bn. on the Left. The 28th C.I.Bn. in Support at the outset, became involved as the Attack progresses, and eventually captured the centre portion of the 6th C.I.B. Final Objective.

The 6th C.I.B. jumped-off from the portion of the BLUE DOTTED LINE which they had captured on the previous day. The Village of ROSIERES lay in the centre of the Brigade Objective. The Attack was launched 45 minutes in advance of our Troops on the Right. As with the other Brigades the main enemy Opposition came from well-placed Machine Gun Nests. The 29th C.I.Bn. on the Left was continuously exposed to Machine Gun Fire from Positions N. of the Railway. The Infantry pressed on and by 1.30 P.M. ROSIERES was in our hands. Just after our Line had been advanced through the Village the enemy

counter-attacked the Right Flank with Troops brought up in Motor Lorries, but was driven off by our Lewis Gun and Rifle Fire.

At this stage the Germans were making every effort to delay the Advance of the Australians against LIHONS, and had succeeded in temporarily checking their progress. The 6th C.I.B. Left was therefore exposed, and our Troops waited until the Australians came up. The Attack was then resumed. The SUGAR FACTORY, on the MEHARICOURT-ROSIERES Road, was captured by the 29th C.I.Bn. at 4.00 P.M.: the 28th C.I.Bn., in the Brigade centre, continued the Advance capturing 150 Prisoners. A Line was eventually consolidated, 500 to 800 yds. E. of the MEHARICOURT-ROSIERES Road, with the Right in touch with the 5th C.I.B. and the Left on the AMIENS-NESLE Railway.

The 4 Batteries of No. 2 Company (Major McCORKELL), Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., attacked with the 6th C.I.B. "H" Battery, under Capt. TUCKER, M.C., M.M., was on the Right, "F" Battery, under Capt. J.A. RAMSAY, on the Left. When the Advance was held up E. of ROSIERES, the Guns of "F" Battery and 4 Guns of "H" Battery under Lieut. BLAIR were placed to cover the Gap between the 6th C.I.B. Left Flank and the Australians. When the Germans retired before the Australians, Lieut. BLAIR's Guns, which enfiladed a Sunken Road crossed by the Germans in their retirement, had excellent Targets and inflicted numerous Casualties. Great assistance was given the Australians by the Flanking Fire of these Guns. Capt. TUCKER moved the remaining 4 Guns of his Battery to the Right Flank. No. 2 Company guns were placed in Defensive Positions on the Eastern outskirts of ROSIERES when the 6th C.I.B. Line was consolidated for the day, and remained there throughout the night 9th/10th August.

Casualties suffered by No. 2 Company Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., during August 9th were, 4 Gunners, killed, and 20 Gunners, wounded.

No.3 Company, Second Bn., C.M.G.C.

No. 3 Company (Major McCAMUS, M.C.), Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., which had borne the brunt of the fighting on the previous day, did not come into Action on August 9th, but remained in Support with the 4th C.I.B., S. of WIENCOURT-l'EQUIPEE.

OPERATIONS, RELIEFS, MOVES: AUGUST 10th TO 25th, 1918.

General Situation August 10th.

The Advance of the Third, First and Second Cdn. Divisions on August 9th brought the Canadian Corps to the Eastern edge of the SOMME Trench System. The Line at this point had formed the Right Flank of the Allied Offensive in 1916. The Germans had withdrawn from it in their Strategic Retreat in the Spring of 1917, and had recovered this ground in their March Offensive, 1918.

The Resistance which the enemy offered to our Advance on August 9th made it apparent that he was reinforcing his Line, and suggested he would make a stand in his old strongly-entrenched and well-wired Positions of 1916. Our Attack of August 10th confirmed this view, and pointed to the resumption of Trench warfare. Rather than sacrifice lives needlessly the Corps Commander decided not to push the Attack further until a set piece Attack could be arranged with adequate Artillery support. This set-piece Attack never actually took place" for, while plans for it were being prepared, the Canadian Corps was withdrawn from the FOURTH ARMY to take part in Offensive Operations E. of ARRAS.

The Total Advance made by the Canadian Corps on the AMIENS Front, subsequent to August 9th exceeded 4000 yds. Far the greater part of this advance took place on August 10th. The Attack on this date was carried out by the Third Cdn. Division and Thirty-second Division (British) on the Right, and the Fourth Cdn. Division on the Left.

Action of Third Bn., C.M.G.C.; August 10th.

The Third Cdn. Division attacked with the 8th C.I.B. which had been in the Front Line the previous day. The 2nd C.M.R. Bn. was on the Right, the 1st C.M.R. Bn. on the Left. When the leading troops had captured le QUESNOY and advanced our Line on the Divisional Left, the Thirty second Division (British) passed through the Third Cdn. Division at 9.45 A.M. and continued the Attack.

The Dispositions of the Third Battalion, C.M.G.C., remained unchanged during the Advance of the 8th C.I.B. No. 3 Company Guns were in Position in the vicinity of BOUCHOIR, with the 8th C.I.B.; No. 1 Company Guns were in Support with the 7th C.I.B. near FOLIES; No. 2 Company was at MAISON BLANCHE in Divisional Reserve. Battalion H.Q. remained at BEAUCOURT.

Operations of Fourth Bn., C.M.G.C.; August 10th.

The Fourth Cdn. Division attacked on a 2-Brigade Front from ROUVROY to the AMIENS-NESLE Railway. The Battle Order of Assaulting Brigades and Battalions from Right to Left was as follows:-

Brigade	Front Line.	Support.
10th C.I.B.	44th C.I.Bn. 46th C.I.Bn.	47th C.I.Bn. 50th C.I.Bn.
12th C.I.B.	72nd C.I.Bn. 85th C.I.Bn.	76th C.I.Bn. 38th C.I.Bn.

The General Objective was the Line HATTENCOURT-HALLU to the Left Corps Boundary. The Division was assisted by 19 Tanks. The Australians attacked on the Left to capture LIHONS.

At 10.15 A.M., Fourth Division Assaulting Troops passed through the Second Cdn. Division. Stiff Fighting took place all along the Line. The Operations of Tanks were greatly handicapped by the Trenches. The Infantry had recourse to Trench Warfare Tactics and succeeded in reaching their Objectives. The Villages of FOUQUESCOURT, MAUCOURT, CHILLY and HALLU were taken in the day's Operations. Heavy Fighting took place for the Capture of FOUQUESCOURT and CHILLY. The Thirty-second Division on the Right was unable to get forward. 2 Enemy Counter-attacks, delivered in the evening on the 12th C.I.B. Front, were successfully driven off, and in the Line, FOUQUESCOURT-CHILLY-LIHONS Road to the Railway, was consolidated. Posts were retained in HALLU throughout the night August 10th/11th.

In the early morning of the 10th, the entire Personnel of the Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., assembled in the small Wood, S.-W. of CAIX. From here "A", "C" and "D" Batteries moved off to their respective Tasks, in support of the Fourth Division Attack. Major BRITTON, O.C., No. 1 Company, proceeded to 10th C.I.B. Headquarters, and Capt. WEAVER, to 12th C.I.B. Headquarters as M.G. Liaison Officers, "B" Battery, and Nos. 2 and 3 Companies were in Divisional Reserve under Major L.F. PEARCE, M.C., commanding No. 2 Company.

"D" Battery, Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., supported the 10th C.I.B., "A" and "C" Batteries the 12th C.I.B. "A" and "D" Batteries were used in a Defensive role and took up Defensive Positions to assist in Consolidation.

"C" Battery, under Capt. RAINBOTH, M.C., moved forward, with Guns on Pack Animals, in Rear of the 85th C.I.Bn. on the 12th C.I.Bn. Left. Severe enemy Machine Gun Fire was experienced, from Positions N. of the Railway, soon after jumping off. At 1.45 P.M., 4 Guns of "C" battery came into Action 500 yds. W. of the CHILLY-LIHONS Road against enemy S. and E. of LIHONS. Captured German Guns were used also by this Battery. Positions were eventually occupied in the old Trench System W. of the CHILLY-LIHONS Road.

Final Dispositions Fourth Bn., C.M.G.C.; August 10th.

Subsequent to this Attack, Fourth Battalion Dispositions were re-arranged. At 3.00 P.M., under Orders from the Battalion Commander, Lt.-Col. M. SCOTT, D.S.C., "B" Battery and No. 2 Company were placed in Defensive Positions as follows:-

"B" Battery	Eastern Outskirts of ROSIERES.
"E" Battery	1500 yds. W. of VRELY.
"F" Battery	Eastern outskirts of ROSIERES.
"G" Battery)	1500 yds. S.-W. of VRELY, immediately N. of WARVILLERS.
"H" Battery)	

No. 3 Company spent the morning of the 10th in reorganizing and re-equipping its Gun Crews and at 3.00 P.M. proceeded to HATCHET WOOD, 2500 yds. W. of VRELY. Advanced Battalion H.Q. moved from DEMUIN at 6.30 A.M. to the Wood 1500 yds. S.-E. of CAIX, and at 11.3 A.M. to the Mill, 1000 yds. S.-W. of VRELY, Rear Battalion H.Q. moved to CAYEUX Wood.

Dispositions of First Bn., C.M.G.C.; August 10th.

The First and Second Battalions, C.M.G.C., remained in Reserve with their Divisions during August 10th. The First Battalion was disposed as follows:-

No. 1 Company, less "C" Battery, and No. 2 Company less "F" Battery, remained throughout the day in Defensive Positions occupied on August 9th. At 7.00 P.M. "A", "B" and "D" Batteries assembled, with

"A" Echelon Transport, in the vicinity of BEAUFORT. "E" and "H" Batteries with "F" Battery from Divisional Reserve assembled with "A" Echelon Transport in ROUVROY. "G" Battery joined "C" and "J" Batteries in Divisional Reserve at BEAUFORT.

At 8.00 P.M., the 3rd C.I.B. took over the 1st C.I.B. Defensive Front, on either Flank of ROUVROY and No. 3 Company Guns less "J" Battery were moved up to Defensive Positions along this Front. "K" Battery was on the Right, supporting the 16th C.I.Bn. "L" Battery, on the Left Supporting the 14th C.I.Bn.: 4 Guns, "M" Battery, were in Rear of the Brigade Centre, and 4, in Reserve at WARVILLERS. No. 3 Company H.Q. were with the 3rd C.I.B. in WARVILLERS Chateau. No. 1 Company moved back to the vicinity of BEAUFORT. These Dispositions were completed at 10.00 P.M. Battalion H.Q. opened at Billet 58, BEAUFORT at 5.00 P.M.

Dispositions of Second Bn., C.M.G.C.; August 10th.

The Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., was disposed as follows:-

No. 1 Company Guns remained in Defensive Positions N. and S. of MEHARICOURT. No. 2 Company moved forward to Defensive Positions in the vicinity of the SUGAR FACTORY E. of ROSIERES. No. 3 Company remained in Divisional Reserve in WIENCOURT-l'EQUIPEE Area. Advanced Battalion H.Q. remained with Second Cdn. Division H.Q. at BOIS PIERRET. Rear Battalion H.Q. with "B" Echelon Transport, moved from CACHY to the Draw S. and W. of WIENCOURT-l'EQUIPEE.

Operations August 11th.

From August 10th until the Canadian Corps was withdrawn from the AMIENS Front, no combined effort was made to break down German Resistance along the Corps Front. Local Attacks were made and our Line advanced from Trench to Trench.

On August 11th, the Corps Line was held by the Thirty-second Division (British) on the Right and the Fourth Cdn. Division on the Left. The First, Second and Third Cdn. Divisions were in Corps Reserve. The Thirty-second Division attacked DAMERY on the morning of the 11th but was unable to make progress against the strongly-entrenched German Positions W. of the Village. On the same day, the Fourth Cdn. Division was subjected to vigorous enemy Counter-attacks. All of these attacks were repulsed, with great loss to the Germans but, in view of the Salient produced by retaining our hold on HALLE, the Posts in this Village were withdrawn, and our Line established 500 yds. E. of CHILLY. Heavy enemy Shelling persisted throughout the day.

Dispositions of Third Bn., C.M.G.C.; August 11th.

The Third Cdn. Division relieved the Thirty-second Division (British) on the night 11th/12th August, the 9th C.I.B. on the Right, the 7th C.I.B. on the Left, the 8th C.I.B. in Reserve. Machine Guns of the Third Battalion remained throughout the 11th in Positions occupied on the previous day. In the evening of August 11th Guns of Nos. 1 and 2 Companies were moved up with the relieving Infantry Brigades.

No. 2 Company, with the 9th C.I.B. on the Right, occupied Positions as follows:-

"F" Battery)	1000 yds. E. of le QUESNOY on a Line BOIS CARRE-101 SUD
"H" Battery)	
"E" Battery)	In 9th C.I.B. Support at BOUCHOIR.
"G" Battery)	

No. 1 Company, with the 7th C.I.B. on the left, was disposed as follows:-

"A" Battery)	1000 yds. W. of a Line, PARVILLERS-FOUQUESCOURT.
"B" Battery)	
"D" Battery	Mid-way between le QUESNOY and ROUVROY.
"C" Battery	1000 yds. S.-W. of ROUVROY in 7th C.I.B. Reserve.

No. 3 Company remained in Divisional Reserve with the 8th C.I.B., in the vicinity of BEETROOT FACTORY, W. of BOUCHOIR.

Battalion Advanced H.Q. moved, with Third Cdn. Division H.Q., to le QUESNEL CHATEAU.

Dispositions of Fourth Bn., C.M.G.C.; August 11th.

To conform with the Tactical Situation, certain changes were made in the Dispositions of Fourth Battalion Machine Guns on August 11th.

Orders were received during the night August 10th/11th for a continuation of the Advance on the 12th by the 10th and 12th C.I.B.s. Lt.-Col. SCOTT detailed No. 2 Company to give covering Fire to the 12th C.I.B. on the Left, for this Attack. When Major PEARCE, O.C., No. 2 Company, had already moved his Batteries into Position, orders were received cancelling the Operation. No. 2 Company Guns were then placed in Support Positions, behind the 12th C.I.B., between MEHARICOURT and the AMIENS-NESLE Railway.

"B" Battery reported to major BRITTON at 10th C.I.B. Headquarters and was placed in Position in close Support of the 10th C.I.B. The 4 Batteries of No. 1 Company were now disposed in Forward Positions as follows:-

"B" Battery)	On a Line, FOUQUESCOURT-MAUCOURT.
"D" Battery)	
"A" Battery)	On a Line, MAUCOURT-N. to the Railway, near Junction with
"C" Battery)	CHILLY-LINONS Road.

No. 3 Company Guns were placed in Support Positions on the Right, between ROUVROY and MEHARICOURT. All Guns of the Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., were in Defensive Positions.

Battalion Advanced H.Q. remained at the Mill, S.-W. of VRELY; Rear H.Q. moved from CAYEUX WOOD to HATCHET WOOD.

First and Second Bns., C.M.G.C.; August 11th.

The First and Second Battalions, C.M.G.C., were in Reserve, with their respective Divisions, on August 11th, the First Battalion, on the Corps Right behind the Third Cdn. Division, the Second Battalion, on the Corps Left behind the Fourth Cdn. Division.

No change took place in First Battalion, C.M.G.C., Dispositions on August 11th. The day was spent by Batteries in cleaning Guns and Equipment.

The Guns of No. 1 Company, Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., were rearranged, 2 Batteries placed E. of MEHARICOURT, 1 Battery W. of MEHARICOURT, and one Battery held in Reserve, 200 yds. W. of the Village, close to VRELY. No change occurred in the Dispositions of No. 2 Company. No. 3 Company moved to CAIX where it remained, prepared to man the AMIENS Defence Line, with the 6th C.I.B., at 30 minutes' notice. Second Battalion Advanced H.Q. moved with Divisional H.Q. to VRELY.

Third Bn., C.M.G.C.; Operations, August 12th to 16th.

The 9th and 7th C.I.B.s, Third Cdn. Division, brought continuous pressure to bear on the enemy Line, during the 4 days following their Relief of the Thirty-second Division, and on August 15th succeeded in capturing the villages of DAMERY and FARVILLERS. In this period a strong Trench System 4000 yds. in Length and 200 yds. wide was cleared of the enemy. By the Operations on August 15th, the French were enabled to enter Bois-en-Z. from the Rear, and so passed through the German Main Resistance Line on the way to HOYE, 2½ miles distant. In the same period 350 to 450 Prisoners were taken with 160 Machine Guns and numerous Trench Mortars. Approximately 800 German dead were counted in the captured Area.

Forward Guns of the Third Battalion, C.M.G.C., supported Infantry Attacks with Overhead Covering Fire. On August 12th and 13th, Guns remained in Positions occupied on taking over the Line, night 11th/12th. On August 14th, Batteries of No. 1 Company supporting the 7th C.I.B. were re-adjusted to conform to the Infantry Advance. "B" Battery moved forward 1000 yds. to Positions S. and E. of BOIS NOIR (S. of FOUQUESCOURT). "C" Battery, from Brigade Reserve, moved forward 2000 yds. to Positions mid-way between PARVILLERS and ROUVROY. Slight changes were made in the Dispositions of "A" and "D" Batteries, No. 1 Company, and of "F" and "H" Batteries, No. 2 Company, but the Guns of these Batteries remained on the same general Line of Defence. No. 3 Company remained in Divisional Reserve in the same Location.

Third Bn., C.M.G.C., relieved; August 15th/16th and 16th/17th.

On nights August 15th/16th and 16th/17th, the Third Cdn. Division was relieved by the First Cdn. Division and passed into Corps Reserve, with 1 Brigade ready to move at 30 minutes' notice, the remaining 2, at 24 hours' notice.

The Third Battalion, C.M.G.C., was relieved by the First Battalion, C.M.G.C., nights August 15th/16th and 16th/17th. No. 2 Company was relieved by No. 2 Company of the First Battalion, night 15th/16th, and proceeded to Battalion Rear H.Q., 1500 yds. W. of FOLIES. No. 1 Company was relieved by No. 3 Company, First Battalion, night 16th/17th, and proceeded to Battalion Rear H.Q. On August 16th, No. 2 Company and Battalion H.Q. moved to CLAUDE WOOD, 1500 yds. N.W. of BEAUCOURT, where they were joined by No. 1 Company on August 17th. No. 3 Company remained in the vicinity of the BEETROOT FACTORY, W. of BOUCHOIR, ready to move with the 8th C.I.B. at 30 minutes' notice.

Fourth and Second Cdn. Divisions; Operations, August 12th to 17th.

While the Third Cdn. Division were advancing our Line on the Corps Right Front, the Fourth and Second Cdn. Divisions improved and slightly advanced our Line on the Left. During the fighting on August 12th, the 44th C.I.Bn., Fourth Cdn. Division, maintained touch with the 42nd C.I.Bn., Third Cdn. Division, on their immediate Right, and materially assisted their Advance. No change occurred in the Machine Gun Dispositions of the Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., on August 12th. Battalion Rear H.Q. moved on this day from HATCHET WOOD to the Small WOOD S.-W. of CAIX. The Fourth Cdn. Division was relieved by the Second Cdn. Division, nights 12th/13th and 14th/15th, and passed into Corps Reserve.

The Second Cdn. Division took over the Line with the 4th C.I.B. on the Right and the 5th C.I.B. on the Left. Plans for a further Attack were issued on August 14th, but these Operations were later indefinitely postponed. On August 15th, the 19th C.I.Bn., 4th C.I.B., attacked and captured the Village of FRANSART, capturing 39 Prisoners. The Line was strengthened and improved on the remainder of the Second Division Front.

Second Bn., C.M.G.C.; Operations, August 12th to 17th.

On August 12th, No. 3 Company Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., relieved No. 2 Company in Reserve Positions on the Division Left, and No. 2 Company moved, on Relief, to CAIX. Otherwise Dispositions remained unchanged throughout the day. Nos. 1 and 3 Companies, Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., were allotted to the 4th C.I.B. for their Relief of the Fourth Cdn. Division Right, night 12th/13th. "A", "C" and "D" Batteries relieved 24 Guns, Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., on the Right of the Divisional Frontage. "B" Battery was held in Reserve, N. of WARVILLERS. "J", "K" and "L" Batteries relieved 24 Guns, Fourth battalion, C.M.G.C., on the Left of the Divisional Frontage. "M" Battery was held in Reserve, S.-W. of ROSIERES. No. 2 Company remained at CAIX.

According to the original plans for the Relief of the Fourth Division, the Left portion of the Front was to be taken over by Australian Troops. On August 14th, word was received that this Relief could not be effected and on the night August 15th/16th Lt.-Col. WEIR, M.C., commanding the Second Battalion, was instructed to take over the Machine Gun Defence of the 5th C.I.B. on the Divisional Left. "H" and "F" Batteries, No. 2 Company, relieved Fourth Battalion Guns in Forward and Support Positions, respectively, "H" Battery taking over Positions 500 to 1000 yds. W. of the CHILLY-LIHONS Road, "F" Battery relieving Guns E. and N. of MEHARICOURT. "E" and "G" batteries remained in Divisional Reserve at CAIX.

Guns of Nos. 2 and 3 Companies remained in Positions occupied on Relief for the rest of the Tour. On August 15th after the Capture of FRANSART by the 4th C.I.B., Major BASEVI moved forward No. 1 Company Guns to defend the new Line. "D" Battery on the Right and "E" Battery, from Brigade Reserve, on the Left, were moved up to Positions between FOUQUESCOURT and FRANSART. This move was completed by 10.00 P.M. "A" and "C" Batteries were sited on a line E. of FOUQUESCOURT, to strengthen the Defence of the 4th C.I.B. Right Flank.

On nights August 16/17th and 17/18th the Second Cdn. Division was relieved by the Fourth Cdn. Division, and placed in Corps Reserve. Command passed to G.O.C. Fourth Division at 12 Noon, August 17th.

Machine Gun Reliefs took place at the same time as Infantry Reliefs. On the night August 16th/17th, No. 1 Company and "J" and "K" Batteries, No. 3 Company, were relieved by Guns of the Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C. On Night August 17th/18th, "F" and "H" Batteries, No. 2 Company, and "L" and "M" Batteries, No. 3 Company, were relieved by Fourth Battalion Guns. Battalion H.Q. with "E" and "G"

Batteries, in Divisional Reserve, moved, on August 17th, to the WOOD, 1000 yds. S.-E. of CAIX, where they were joined by all batteries on completion of Reliefs.

Fourth Bn., C.M.G.C.; August 13th to 17th.

The Relief of the Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., carried out by the Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., on night 12th/13th left "C" Battery, No. 1 Company, and "E", "F" and "H" Batteries, No. 2 Company, Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., still in the Line on the Divisional Left Front. On August 13th, Battalion Advanced H.Q. and the relieved Batteries joined Battalion Rear H.Q. in the Small Wood, S.-W. of CAIX. "C", "E" "F" and "H" Batteries were relieved by the Second Battalion, or withdrawn, night 15th/16th, and joined the remainder of the Battalion in CAIX WOOD.

Batteries out of the Line, August 13th to 17th, spent the interval in gaining rest and refreshment. Bath Parades were held to the Baths near CAIX. Gun Equipment was cleaned and put in order. The prevailing fine weather added greatly to the comfort and enjoyment of all Ranks.

The Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., relieved the Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., nights August 16th/17th and 17th/18th, as follows:- No. 3 Company took over Second Battalion Positions on the Divisional Right, in Support of the 10th C.I.B., night August 16th/17th. On the same night, No. 2 Company, in Divisional Reserve, occupied Defensive Positions, and No. 1 Company moved from CAIX WOOD to the Valley 1500 yds. N.-W. of VRELY. No. 1 Company relieved Second Battalion Guns on the Divisional Left, supporting the 11th C.I.B., night August 17th/18th. Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., Advanced H.Q. took over from the Second Battalion at VRELY on the 17th.

Divisions and Brigades Holding the Line; August 17th.

At 12.00 Noon, August 17th, when command of the Left Divisional Sector passed to the G.O.C. Fourth Cdn. Division, the Canadian Corps Frontage was held by the First Cdn. Division on the Right and the Fourth Cdn. Division on the Left. The First Cdn. Division had relieved the Third Cdn. Division on nights August 15th/16th and 16th/17th. The Battle Order of Brigades, from Right to Left, was as follows:-

First Cdn. Division	2nd C.I.B. 3rd C.I.B.	1st C.I.B. (Reserve).
Fourth Cdn. Division	10th C.I.B. 11th C.I.B.	12th C.I.B. (Reserve).

Second and Third Canadian Divisions were in Corps Reserve.

First Bn., C.M.G.C.; Dispositions, August 17th.

The First Battalion, C.M.G.C., completed the Relief of the Third Battalion, C.M.G.C., on the Right of the Corps Frontage, night August 16th/17th.¹⁰⁷ Positions taken over were the same as those occupied by Third Battalion Guns. "C", "G" and "J" Batteries, from divisional Reserve, rejoined their Companies, prior to this Relief. No. 2 Company supported the 2nd C.I.B. on the Right, No. 3 Company, the 3rd C.I.B. on the Left. No. 1 Company Guns, in Divisional Reserve with the 1st C.I.B. were in Defence Positions on the outskirts of BEAUFORT. Battalion advanced H.Q. was at le QUESNEL CHATEAU, Battalion Rear H.Q., at BEAUFORT.

Fourth Bn., C.M.G.C.; Dispositions, August 18th.

Dispositions of the Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., on August 18th, the day following completion of Relief of the Second Battalion, were as follows:-

No. 3 Company, on the Fourth Cdn. Division Right, supporting the 10th C.I.B.:

"J" Battery - On a Line 500 yds. W. of FRANSART.

"K" Battery - On a Line 1000 yds. W. of the FOUQUESCOURT-MAUCOURT Road.

"L" Battery - Echeloned to the Front, 500 yds. S. of MEHARICOURT.

"M" Battery - Echeloned to the Front, 1500 yds. N.-E. of ROUVROY.

Company H.Q. - 1500 yds. S.-E. of VRELY, 300 yds. E. of VRELY-ROUVROY Road.

¹⁰⁷ See Page 277.

No. 1 Company, on the Fourth Cdn. Division Left, supporting the 11th C.I.B.:

"A" Battery - Left Forward Positions) On a line 500 yds. W. of the
"B" Battery - Centre Forward Positions) CHILLY-LIHONS Road.
"C" Battery - Right Forward Positions)
"D" Battery - In Support between MAUCOURT and MEHARICOURT.
Company H.Q. - 300 yds. S. of ROSIERES SUGAR FACTORY.

No. 2 Company, in Divisional Reserve:

"E" Battery - Near ROSIERES SUGAR FACTORY.
"F" Battery - S.-E. outskirts of ROSIERES.
"G" Battery - 500 yds. S.-E. of VRELY.
"H" Battery - 300 yds. N.-E. of WARVILLERS.
Company H.Q. - VRELY.

Battalion Advanced H.Q. - VRELY.

Battalion Rear H.Q. - S.-W. of CAIX.

First Cdn. Division relieved by French.

The First Canadian Division was relieved by the 55th, 173rd, and 112th Infantry Regiments, XXXVI Corps (French), on the nights August 19th/20th, 20th/21st, 21st/22nd. On the night August 21st/22nd, the Fourth Cdn. Division extended its Front to the S. the 10th C.I.B. taking over a Frontage of 1000 yds. from the 3rd C.I.B. On completion of Relief by the French, the First Cdn. Division was placed in Corps Reserve.

The Tour of the First Battalion, C.M.G.C., from August 17th to August 19th was uneventful. Some harassing Fire was carried out during each night. Otherwise there were no Machine Gun activities. The Relief of the First Battalion, C.M.G.C., by the French corresponded with the Reliefs of Infantry Brigades. No.1 Company was relieved by Machine Guns of the 55th Infantry Regiment, night August 19th/20th, No. 2 Company, by Guns of the 173rd Infantry Regiment night 20th/21st, No. 3 Company, by Guns of the 112th Infantry Regiment, night 21st/22nd. On Relief, all Companies assembled with battalion H.Q. in CAYEUX WOOD.

G.O.C. Cdn. Corps hands over Command of Front.

On August 22nd, the G.O.C. Canadian Corps handed over to the G.O.C. Australian Corps command at the Front, and of the First and Fourth Cdn. Divisions, the 2nd C.M.M.G. Brigade, the 8th Army Brigade, C.F.A. and the C.C.H.A.

Fourth Bn. C.M.G.C., Aug. 18th to 23rd.

Minor Changes in Fourth Battalion Machine Gun Dispositions were effected during this Period. On night August 21st/22nd, when the 10th C.I.B. extended its Front to the Right, "F" Battery from Divisional Reserve took over Machine Gun Positions 1000 yds. S. of FOUQUES COURT, defending the new 10th C.I.B. Front. On the following night these Guns were moved forward, 2 Guns to Positions S. of FRANSART, 6 Guns to Positions S. and S.-W. of FOUQUES COURT, and "E" Battery moved to Support Positions, 1000 yds. W. and S.-W. of FOUQUES COURT.

"D" and "E" Batteries of the 2nd C.M.M.G. Brigade, which had been attached to the Fourth Cdn. Division, took the place of "E" and "F" Batteries, No. 2 Company, in Divisional Reserve Positions E. of ROSIERES.

Only one Operation took place during this Tour of the Fourth Cdn. Division. On August 19th, the 87th C.I.Bn., 11th C.I.B., advanced the Line 500 yds. on a Front of 1200 yds. "A" Battery No. 1 Company, fired an effective M.G. Barrage for this Attack. 4 Enemy Counter-attacks were beaten off during the Afternoon.

Fourth Cdn. Division relieved by French.

The Fourth Cdn. Division was relieved by the Thirty-fifth and Thirty-fourth Divisions, XXXVI Corps (French), on the nights August 23rd/24th and 24th/25th. Machine Gun Reliefs took place at the same time. On night 23rd/24th, "D" Battery, No. 1 Company, and "K" Battery, No. 3 Company, were relieved. The remaining Reliefs were carried out night 24th/25th. "A" Battery was not relieved until the early A.M. of the 25th, and, during the night, suffered 13 Casualties including Lieut. WOOLWARD, from

enemy Gas Shelling. On Relief all Batteries marched to the Orchard, on the S. Bank of the LUCE, 1000 yds. E. of HOURS. Battalion Rear H.Q. had preceded the Batteries to this Location on August 24th.

Moves of Infantry to ARRAS Front.

The Transfer of the Canadian Corps from the FOURTH ARMY to the FIRST ARMY began on night August 19th/20th. On this and the following night, the Second and Third Cdn. Divisions, respectively, entrained and embussed in the Area of S. of AMIENS. They detrained and debussed on the 20th and 21st in the BOUQUEMAISON Area, and proceeded by Route March, the Second Cdn. Division, to the ETRUN Area, the Third Cdn. Division, to the HERMAVILLE Area.

At 10.00 A.M., August 22nd, the day on which the G.O.C. handed over command of the AMIENS Front to the Australian Corps, Canadian Corps H.Q. opened at HAUTECLOQUE, 3 miles S. of ST. POL.

On the night August 24th/25th, the First Cdn. Division entrained S. of MIENS and detrained on the 25th at TINGUES, SAVY and AUBIGNY. The Division concentrated on this date in the ARRAS Area.

The Fourth Cdn. Division entrained S. of AMIENS on night August 27th/28th, detraining the following day at AUBIGNY, ACQ and MAROEUIL. The Fourth Cdn. Division concentrated in the ARRAS Area. The ARRAS-CAMBRAI Operations began on August 26th so that, when the Fourth Division rejoined the Canadian Corps, the other 3 Canadian Divisions were already heavily engaged.

Moves of M.G. Units to ARRAS Front.

The Machine Gun Battalions moved North with their respective Divisions.

The Third Battalion, C.M.G.C., was the first of the M.G. Battalions to reach the ARRAS Area. On August 17th, the Battalion was disposed as follows:-

Nos. 1 and 2 Companies and Battalion H.Q., in CLAUDE WOOD.

No. 3 Company, in the vicinity of BEETROOT FACTORY W. of BOUCHOIR. The Battalion remained in these Positions on the 18th. On the 19th, the Unit entrained and embussed for the N.

The Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., was in CAYEUX WOOD on August 18th, following its Relief by the Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C. On the 19th, the whole Unit marched to GENTELLES WOOD, and on the 20th, entrained for the ARRAS Front.

The First Battalion, C.M.G.C., on completion of Relief by the French, night 21st/22nd was concentrated in CAYEUX WOOD. On the 22nd, all Companies marches to GENTELLES WOOD: Battalion H.Q. moved to BOVES. On the 23rd, Battalion H.Q. and Companies moved to BOUTILLERIE where they remained until the 25th when the Battalion entrained for the N.

The Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C., concentrated in the ORCHARD, E. of BOURGES, on the morning of August 25th, following the Relief by the French. The same evening, Battalion H.Q. moved to SAINS-en-AMIENOIS and Companies joined their Brigade Groups in GENTELLES WOOD, where they remained throughout the 26th. The Fourth Battalion entrained for the ARRAS Area on August 27th.

The 2nd C.M.M.G. Brigade assembled in BEAUFORT WOOD on August 24th and proceeded N. on the 25th.

The following Table shows that the MOVES of Canadian Machine Gun Battalions from the FOURTH to the FIRST ARMY Area:-

Table of Moves: Canadian M.G. Battalions,
AMIENS Area to ARRAS Area,
August, 1918.

	Unit	Entrained at.	Date Aug.	Detrained at.	Date Aug.	Billeted at.
First Bn., C.M.G.C.	Battalion H.Q. ^(s) No. 1 Company No. 2 Company No. 3 Company	BACQUEL BACQUEL SALEUX	25th 25th 25th	SAVY SAVY AUBIGNY	25th 26th 26th 26th	HERMAVILLE ARRAS ARRAS ARRAS
Second Bn., C.M.G.C.	Battalion H.Q. No. 1 Company No. 2 Company No. 3 Company	LONGEAU LONGEAU LONGEAU LONGEAU	20th 20th 20th 20th	FREVENT FREVENT FREVENT FREVENT	21st 21st 21st 21st	MONCHEAUX HOUVIN-HOUVIGNEUIL MONTs-en-TERNOIS MONCHEAUX

Third Bn., C.M.G.C. (y)	Battalion H.Q. No. 1 Company No. 2 Company ^(z) No. 3 Company	BOVES MAISON BLANCHE BOVES	19th 19th 19th	BOUQUEMAISON GROUCHES BOUQUEMAISON	20th 20th 20th 20th	SUS-ST. LEGER SUS-ST. LEGER SUS-ST. LEGER SUS-ST. LEGER
Fourth Bn., C.M.G.C.	Battalion H.Q. ^(x) No. 1 Company No. 2 Company No. 3 Company	LONGEAU LONGEAU LONGEAU	27th 27th 27th	ACQ ACQ ACQ	27th 28th 28th 28th	HERMAVILLE ARRAS WARLUS ST. NICHOLAS

(x) By Battalion Motor Transport (y) Transport moved by Road (z) By Motor Lorry.

CONCLUSION.

Transport and Supplies.

The Plans for the AMIENS Operation presupposed that the first day's Attack would create a condition of semi-open Warfare. Arrangements were therefore made for the fullest possible use to be made of Machine Gun Transport. Only those Guns detailed for the Attack on the First Objective were man-handled. Batteries going forward to the RED and BLUE DOTTED LINES moved off from the Assembly Area with Guns in Limbers or on Pack Animals.¹⁰⁸ The Limbers or Pack Animals carried Guns and Equipment as far as it was advisable to do so, when the Guns were off-loaded, and the Transport used for establishing S.A.A. Dumps near the Gun Positions.

Provision was made by Officers Commanding M.G. Battalions for early establishing, on August 8th of a Water and S.A.A. Supply forward of the Old Front Line. The First and Third Battalions were each allotted a Supply Tank. These Tanks were loaded with S.A.A. and Water and were detailed to establish Dumps at previously arranged Positions. Lieut.-Col. WATSON also made First Battalion Companies responsible for getting their own S.A.A. forward, 4 G.S. Limbers per Company, under an Officer, being detailed for this purpose. This turned out to be a very wise provision, as the First Battalion Supply Tank broke down before reaching our old Front Line. In the Second and Fourth M.G. Battalions, "B" Echelon Transport was employed on August 8th for getting forward Ammunition and other supplies by Lorries and Limbered Wagons. As the Attack progressed, S.A.A. Dumps were moved forward under Battalion arrangements.

All Battalion Dumps were established centrally to their respective Divisional frontages. On August 8th, the Third Battalion Supply Tank, under Major WHITAKER, crossed the DOMART Bridge at 7.15 A.M. and proceeded at once to a point immediately W. of DEMUIN where a Dump was located, consisting of 170,000 Rounds S.A.A., 50 Gallons Drinking Water and Spare Rations.

Advanced Armourer's Depot.

As in previous Operations, Advanced Armourer's Depots were sent forward by each M.G. Battalion. Their Location was selected beforehand. Armourers were stationed here, ready to effect immediate repairs, and the Depots were stored, as usual, with Supplies of Spare Guns, Spare Parts, Lubricating Oil, Flannelette, etc. These Depots were located on August 8th, well within the old German Lines. In the First Battalion the Armourer's Depot was dispatched in a Lorry which left, at Zero Hour, to follow up the Attack, over a previously selected Route. Special Runners were detailed by the Officer in Charge to advise Company and Battery Commanders of the Lorry's position, from time to time. The Supply Tank of the Third Battalion, under Major WHITAKER, carried forward the Advanced Armourer's Depot/.

Communications.

On account of the Depth of our Objectives on August 8th, Machine Gun Battalions did not attempt to lay their own Wires forward to Companies from Battalion Headquarters. Shortage of Personnel, and the inadequacy of Telephone Wire made this inadvisable. Also Companies operated closely with Brigades, and it was arranged that Machine Gun Units should use Wires from Brigade H.Q. to Divisional H.Q. and vice versa. To supplement this Service Mounted Orderlies and Runners were used, between Companies and Battalion H.Q. Various means of Communication were used between Batteries and Companies.

¹⁰⁸ Machine Gun Battalion Transport was divided into 2 Echelons: "A" Echelon, consisting of 4 Limbers per Battery and Company Water-Cart, moved forward under Orders of Officers Commanding Companies. "B" Echelon, consisting of the remainder of Company Transport, Battalion H.Q. Transport, Battalion Q.M. Stores, etc., moved under orders of the Battalion Commander.

Batteries in close Liaison with Infantry Battalions were often able to use an Inf. Battalion Wire to Brigade H.Q. and so to Company H.Q. Visual Signalling, with Lucas Lamps was used also, with varying success. Some Batteries laid wires to Company H.Q. Runners were employed where other means of Communication were lacking.

Attempts were made to carry forward, by Visual Signalling, a series of Relay Posts or Battalion Report Centres. This System was used very considerably in subsequent Operations but, on August 8th, it was found unsatisfactory, owing to dust, which obscured observations, and to the difficulty of informing Batteries and Companies where the Relay Posts were located. On August 10th, when the Line became more or less stationary, Wire Communications were established down to Batteries, and Visual Signalling by Lucas Lamps was used quite generally to supplement Wire Communications.

Casualties, Battle of AMIENS.

The following Table shows Casualties suffered by the 4 Battalions of the Canadian Machine Gun Corps during the Battle of AMIENS:-

Unit	Killed		Wounded		Missing		TOTAL		
	Off.	O.R.s	Off.	O.R.s	Off.	O.R.s	Off.	O.R.s	TOTAL
First Battalion, C.M.G.C.		22	5	82		3	5	107	112
Second Battalion, C.M.G.C.		13	4	83		5	4	101	105
Third Battalion, C.M.G.C.		10	2	38		5	2	53	55
Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C.	2	16	2	60	1 ^(x)	12 ^(y)	5	88	93
TOTAL	2	61	13	263	1	25	16	349	365

^(x) Prisoner of War. ^(y) 2, Prisoners of War.

Casualties, August 8th and 9th.

The following Table shows the Casualties for the first 2 days of Operations. It will be seen that 75% of the TOTAL Casualties suffered by the 4 Canadian M.G. Battalions on the AMIENS Front were incurred on August 8th and 9th.

Unit	Date (Aug.)	Killed		Wounded		Missing		TOTAL		
		Off.	O.R.s	Off.	O.R.s	Off.	O.R.s	Off.	O.R.s	TOTAL
First Battalion, C.M.G.C.	8		9	3	33		2	3	44	47
	9		10	2	28		2	2	40	42
Second Battalion, C.M.G.C.	8		8	3	43		3	3	54	57
	9		4		20		2		26	26
Third Battalion, C.M.G.C.	8		3	1	16		1	1	20	21
	9			1	15			1	15	16
Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C.	8	2	12	1	34	1 ^(x)	11 ^(y)	4	57	61
	9		2		1				3	3
TOTAL		2	48	11	190	1	21	14	259	273

^(x) Prisoner of War. ^(y) 2, Prisoners of War.

Reinforcements.

As for the Operation at PASSCENDAELE, Canadian Machine Gun Corps Reinforcements were supplied from the C.M.G.C.R.D. at AUBIN-ST. VAAST,¹⁰⁹ through the medium of an Advanced Reinforcement Depot, close to the Battle Line. This advanced Machine Gun Reinforcement Depot was placed for Organisation and administrative purposes under the Canadian Corps Reinforcement Camp advanced Depot and for the opening Phase of the Battle of AMIENS, was located in the BOIS de NEUILLY, S.-W. of PICQUIGNY. The Machine Gun Personnel was grouped into a Machine Gun Wing, commanded by a

¹⁰⁹ See Part II, Page ***

Machine Gun Officer detailed for the purpose, Machine Gun Instructors and Equipment were supplied to the Wing from the C.M.G.C.R.D.

The procedure for the actual supply of Reinforcements to Units was as follows:- Estimated Casualties were wired daily to H.Q., C.M.G.C. by Machine Gun Battalions and Motor Machine Gun brigades. Upon receipt of these Wires, Dispatch Wires, giving Officers by name and numbers of Other ranks, by their specialties, were at once submitted by H.Q., C.M.G.C., to Canadian Corps "A: for sanction, and despatched to the O.C., Advanced C.C.R.C. for Action. This latter Officer then issued Orders to the O.C., Machine Gun Wing, who detailed the required Reinforcing Personnel and supervised their dispatch to Units. Nominal Rolls were made out, one copy going to each Unit reinforced, and other copies to Advanced C.C.R.C. for transmission to C.C.R.C. and C.M.G.C.R.D. All Dispatch Wires sent to Advanced C.C.R.C. were repeated to the O.C., C.M.G.C.R.D., who immediately warned a corresponding number of Reinforcements to proceed to the Advanced C.C.R.D. In the way the supply of Reinforcing Personnel in the Battle Area was kept constant.

As our line was carried forward, the distance between Advanced C.C.R.C. at PICQUIGNY and the Unit in the Line (?) became so great that it was difficult to get Reinforcements up with sufficient rapidity. Arrangements were made for the 1st and 2nd C.M.M.G. Brigades Motor Transport to convey Personnel forward and, eventually, Advanced C.C.R.C. was moved to BOVES and a staging camp opened at BEAUCOURT. This arrangement continued until the Canadian Corps was withdrawn from the AMIENS FRONT.

Tactical Lessons.

In the Battle of AMIENS, Battalions of the Canadian Machine Gun Corps experienced for the first time, conditions of Open Warfare. Training during the Summer of 1918, when the Canadian Corps was in Rest, had included many Exercises, in Open Warfare Tactics. All Ranks had an opportunity, in the AMIENS Fighting of putting into practice the Lessons learned in these Field Exercises. The experience derived from the Operations themselves proved of incalculable value during the succeeding months of the War. The following extracts from Machine Gun Battalion Reports illustrate observations made by Machine Gun Battalion Commanders and the chief Lessons learned in the Course of the Battle.

"Batteries, whether in reserve or advancing in rear of Infantry, must use limbers or pack animals, or both, and must not be divided into Sections while there is a probability of continued Advance. To properly support the Infantry advance, Batteries need not follow closer than 1000 yds. in rear of the first wave. Their moves should be by bounds, and detailed by the Battery Commander, who will advance with the Infantry. When the Infantry are held up by a centre of resistance, they do not require Machine Gun Support if the resistance point can be overcome in a short time. From half an hour to an hour is required to determine the situation, by which time Batteries can easily come into action at any suitable spot, in order to develop superiority of fire."¹¹⁰

"Great difficulty was experienced by some Batteries who tried to keep pace, on foot, with the rapidly advancing Infantry, preventing participation in fire-fights, unless hold-ups were of lengthy duration."¹¹¹

"The diamond formation of guns in pairs, with 200 or 300 yds. intervals and approximately 600 yds. distances, was adopted by all Batteries in this advance. Gun and S.A.A. Limbers moved with, or close up to the Batteries at all times, thereby eliminating all unnecessary fatigue, and ensuring mobility at all times."¹¹²

Liaison With Infantry.

"Battery Commanders cannot fight their Batteries and personally be Liaison Officers to Infantry Battalion Commanders, in rapid open warfare. A Battery must be allotted a certain area to advance over cover the consolidation of their objective, and eventually defend the area in depth.

¹¹⁰ Report on Operations, Aug. 8th to 16th, 1918, by Lt.-Col. M.A. SCOTT, D.S.O., commanding Fourth Bn., C.M.G.C.

¹¹¹ Report on Operations, Aug. 9th to 10th, 1918, by Lt.-Col. WATSON, D.S.O., commanding First Bn., C.M.G.C.

¹¹² Report on Operations, Aug. 9th to 16th, 1918, by Lt.-Col. WATSON, D.S.O., commanding First Bn., C.M.G.C.

Also Battery Commanders should be allowed to use their own initiative in giving supporting fire on targets coming within range, irrespective of the particular unit which they are following. This method was successfully tried out, and proved entirely satisfactory."

"It was demonstrated, during the advance on BEAUFORT,¹¹³ that batteries, well under control, can fire a supporting indirect fire barrage at short notice."¹¹⁴

Divisional M.G. Reserve.

"As many Batteries as possible should remain in Divisional Reserve, under orders of the D.M.G.C. These can then be despatched, on short notice to any part of the Divisional Front, either to assist in overcoming strong points, or leap-frogging forward batteries, or to take up defensive Positions."¹¹⁵

Lessons In Use Of Transport.

"Use of limbers in the semi-open warfare which followed the initial Attack proved very satisfactory in this area where there were not many trenches to cross and no Wire."¹¹⁶

"Pack Animals are more suitable than limbers:-

(a) Over rough ground with obstacles.

(b) If Roads and limber tracks are scarce.

(c) If, on account of hostile fire, it is necessary to choose covered approaches and keep away from roads."

"Limbers should be used with four up, in case of casualties among animals. Pack Saddlery should be carried even when using limbers for moving forward."¹¹⁷

"Each Battery operated its own limbers ('A' Echelon) during an actual advance but limbers parked at night in pre-arranged rendezvous, the 4 Batteries of each company being together. The Q.M.S. and Storemen of each Company (1 Storeman per Battery) remaining with 'B' Echelon and delivered rations to 'A' Echelon, who, in turn, supplied the Gun Crews."¹¹⁸

Suggested Distribution of Battery Transport and Personnel.

The following distribution of Machine Gun battery Transport and Personnel was suggested by the Officer Commanding the Fourth Battalion, C.M.G.C.:-

Transport.

With the Guns -	4 Gun Limbers 1 Limber for Rations, etc.
With 'B' Echelon -	2 S.A.A. Limbers loaded, prepared to move forward at any time.
Riding Horses -	1 Horse for Battery Commander. 1 Horse for Battery Transport N.C.O. 1 Horse for Orderly.

Personnel.

With Battery Commander - 4 Runners (including 1 Batman).

¹¹³ See Page ***

¹¹⁴ Report on Operations, Aug. 9th to 10th, 1918, by Lt.-Col. WATSON, D.S.O., commanding First Bn., C.M.G.C.

¹¹⁵ Report on Operations, Aug. 7th to 10th, 1918, by Lt.-Col. M.A. SCOTT, D.S.O., commanding Fourth Bn., C.M.G.C.

¹¹⁶ Report by Lt.-Col. J.G. WEIR, M.C., commanding 2nd Bn., C.M.G.C., dated Aug. 11th, 1918.

¹¹⁷ Lessons from Recent M.G. Operations, dated Aug. 18th, 1918, by Lt.-Col. MOORHOUSE, commanding 3rd Bn., C.M.G.C.

¹¹⁸ Report by Lt.-Col. WEIR, M.C., commanding 2nd Bn., C.M.G.C., dated Aug. 11th, 1918.

With each Section -	2 Runners (with Brigades).
With Battery -	1 Mounted Orderly. 1 Officer per Section. 1 N.C.O. and 2 Men per Gun. 2 Batmen (Brakemen). 17 Drivers.
At Company H.Q. -	Company Commander. 1 Officer (a/Adjutant). 2 Batmen. 2 Runners per Battery. 2 Mounted Orderlies.

Communications.

All Machine Gun Battalion Commanders emphasized the need for Motor-Cyclist Dispatch Riders. Mounted Orderlies, when used, proved invaluable. It was found unsatisfactory to rely upon Brigade and Divisional Report Centres for Communications between M.G. Company and Battalion Headquarters, and it was suggested that Motor-Cyclists be provided to ensure rapid and constant Communication.

Successes of M.G. Organisation.

The Organisation of Machine Guns of each Division into Machine Gun Battalions, with the Battery as a Tactical Unit,¹¹⁹ was severely tested for the first time, in these Operations. The Battery of 8 Guns, with its Transport complete, was found to be a most satisfactory Unit under Open Warfare conditions. Quite generally, the Principles of Employment of Machine Guns, outlined by Brig.-Gen. BRUTINEL, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., G.O.C., Canadian Machine Gun Corps, and published by Canadian Corps on April 30th, 1918,¹²⁰ were applied and fully substantiated in the Battle of AMIENS.

¹¹⁹ See Part I, page ***

¹²⁰ See Part I, page ***

CAMBRAI.

PHASE I : AUGUST 26TH to 28TH, 1918.

INTRODUCTORY.

General Plan of Operations.

In spite of reverse suffered on the MARNE and at the Battle of AMIENS, the Germans still had hopes of being able to reorganise and stem the Allies' on-rush behind the HINDENBURG LINE, which was still intact. The Allies laid plans to extinguish those hopes by erecting a breach in the BROUCOURT-QUEANT Line and by the Capture of CAMBRAI. The Canadian Corps was to be used in this Attempt.

The Second Canadian Division arrived in the ARRAS Area from AMIENS on August 20th. This Division relieved a part of the Fifteenth Division (British) during the nights August 22nd/23rd and 23rd/24th, in the NEUVILLE VITASSE-TELEGRAPH HILL Sector, S.-E. of ARRAS, coming under Orders of the XVII CORPS. The G.O.C., Second Canadian Division assumed command of the Line at 9.00 A.M. August 23rd.

The G.O.C., Canadian Corps moved his Headquarters from HAUTE-CLOQUE to NOYELLE-VION on August 23rd and at noon on that day assumed command of the XVII Corps Front from NEUVILLE VITASSE to GAVRELLE, the Fifteenth and Fifty-first Division (British) coming under his command.

On the night August 23rd/24th, the Third Cdn. Division which had arrived on the ARRAS Front from AMIENS on August 21st, relieved the balance of the Fifteenth Division (British) from the ARRAS-CAMBRAI Road to the SCARPE RIVER, immediately on the Left of the Second Cdn. Division. The G.O.C., Third Cdn. Division assumed command of this Sector at 10.00 A.M. August 24th.

The First and Fourth Cdn. Divisions were not used in Phase I of this Battle, the former returning to the Canadian Corps on August 25th and the latter not until August 28th.

The General Plan of the Operation was defined by the B.G., G.S. Canadian Corps, in a letter dated August 25th, 1918, and sent to General Officers Commanding Formations in the Corps. It is quoted in full:-

"The Commander in Chief yesterday indicated to the Corps Commander the outline of Operations to be undertaken by the Corps, which were as follows:-

"The Corps, reinforced by other British Divisions, has the task of driving in S. of the SCARPE to break the QUEANT-DROCOURT Line and reach the Line of the CANAL du NORD. When this has been accomplished the Corps is to swing Southward and sweep down behind the HINDENBURG LINE.

"In view of the above it is essential to push the Operations to-morrow with the utmost vigour, and as much ground as possible must be gained. Leading Brigades must continue pushing on as long as possible and Reserves must be closed up, ready to push through as soon as the leading Troops are expended.

"As far as possible Boundaries will be adjusted so that the Battle can be carried out with 2 Divisions in the Front Line, each on a Brigade Front thus enabling Divisions to keep fighting 3 days continuously.

"We have approximately three main Systems of Defence, in addition to the system E. of MONCHY, to penetrate - i.e. the old German Front Line E. of MONCHY, the FRESNES-ROUVROY Line and the DROCOURT-QUEANT Line.

"These Systems will mark definite stages in the Advance as it will probably be necessary to pause for 24 hours in front of each, while fresh Brigades and Tanks are brought up and Artillery moved Forward."

The Canadian Corps, on the Right Wing of the FIRST ARMY Front, was to attack Eastwards on both sides of the ARRAS-CAMBRAI Road. The enemy had 4 main Lines of Defence which would have to be broken down before CAMBRAI could be captured:-

- (a) Old German Front Line System, E. of MONCHY-le-PREUX.
- (b) FRESNES-ROUVROY Line.
- (c) DROCOURT-QUEANT Switch.
- (d) CANAL du NORD Line.

This Chapter deals with the Attack on the 1st Line of Defence.

Boundaries.

The THIRD ARMY was operating on the Right of the Canadian Corps and Liaison was established with the Troops on their Left Flank - the XVII Corps. The Attack on the Canadian Corps Front was to be carried out by the Second Division on the Right and the Third, on the Left, the ARRAS-CAMBRAI Road forming the Boundary between these Divisions.

The Fifty-first (Highland) Division, N. of the SCARPE RIVER, was on the Left of the Canadian Corps. It was not participating in the Attack proper, but was to cover the Left Flank of the Third Cdn. Division by advancing towards MOUNT PLEASANT and ROEUX.

The Boundaries of the Canadian Corps Area were the RIVER SCARPE on the N. and a line parallel thereto, and distant approximately 3500 yds. on the S.

On the Second Divisional Front the 6th C.I.B. was entrusted with the Attack on the Right and the 4th C.I.B. with the Attack on the Left. The 5th C.I.B. was held in Reserve in readiness to pass through the Attacking Brigades, on capture by the latter of their Second Objectives. The 8th C.I.B. was attacking on the Third Division Front, with the 7th C.I.B. in close Support ready to push through the 8th C.I.B. and exploit its success. The 9th C.I.B. was in Reserve.

Canadian Corps Order of Battle, August 26th.

The Battle Order of Units, from Right to Left of Corps Front, is shown in the following Table:-

Infantry Unit.	Disposition.	Machine Gun Unit.
Second Cdn. Division.	Canadian Corps Right.	Second Battalion, C.M.G.C.
6th C.I.B.	Second Cdn. Div. Right	No. 2 Company
28th C.I.Bn.	Brigade Right	"E" Battery
27th C.I.Bn.	Brigade Left	"F" Battery
29th C.I.Bn.	Brigade Support	"G" and "H" Batteries
31st C.I.Bn.	Brigade Reserve	
4th C.I.B.	Second Cdn. Div. Left	No. 3 Company
21st C.I.Bn.	Brigade Right	"J" Battery
20th C.I.Bn.	Brigade Left	"M" Battery
18th C.I.Bn.	Bde. Support, Right	"L" Battery
19th C.I.Bn.	Bde. Reserve, Left	"K" Battery
5th C.I.B.	Second Cdn. Div. Reserve	No. 1 Company
Third Cdn. Division.	Canadian Corps Left.	Third Battalion, C.M.G.C.
8th C.I.B.	Third Cdn. Div. Front	No. 1 Company
5th C.M.R.	Brigade Right	"B" Battery
2nd C.M.R.	Brigade Centre	"A" Battery
4th C.M.R.	Brigade Left	"C" Battery
1st C.M.R.	Brigade Support	"D" Battery
7th C.I.B.	Third Cdn. Div. Close Support	No. 2 Company
R.C.R.	Brigade Right	"F" Battery
P.P.C.L.I.	Brigade Centre	"H" Battery
49th C.I.Bn.	Brigade Support	"H" Battery
42nd C.I.Bn.	Brigade Reserve	"G" Battery
9th C.I.B.	Third Cdn. Div. Reserve	No. 3 Company

Tasks and Objectives of Corps.

The First Objective of the Canadian Corps was the GREEN LINE running from Right to Left almost due N. from WANCOURT, along MINORCA and CORSICA TRENCHES, N. of CHAPEL HILL and ORANGE HILL and due N. to the RIVER SCARPE. The First Objective proper did not extend so far S. because at the point where the GREEN LINE crossed the junction of ROSE and MINORCA TRENCHES the Flank of the Second Division was thrown back due W. along EDINBURGH and HUMBER

TRENCHES. When the N. part of this Line was taken, the Second Cdn. Division was to work down MINORCA TRENCH (i.e. the GREEN LINE) to join the Fifty-second Division (British) at the Northern end of WANCOURT SPUR. In this way the enemy would be pocketed in NEUVILLE VITASSE and in the Valley leading to WANCOURT. At the same time, the Battalions holding the Flank along EDINBURGH and HUMBER TRENCHES would turn sharp to the Right and, working from N. to S., with their Right Flank on the original Jumping-off Line and their Left on the GREEN LINE, would mop up the enemy Positions between EDINBURGH TRENCH and the Corps Southern Boundary.

The Second Objective of the Canadian Corps, termed the RED LINE, was at an average distance of 1000 yds. E. of the First Objective, just W. of GUEMAPPE on the Second Divisional Front and on the Western outskirts of MONCHY-le-PREUX on the Third Divisional Front. As soon as the Second Objective was taken, Divisions were to exploit as far E. as possible. Along the Crest of the Ridge E. from MONCHY the Third Cdn. Division would refuse its Left Flank in order to avoid enemy Fire from the high ground N. of the RIVER SCARPE. On the Right the Second Cdn. Division would maintain touch with the flanking Division of the XVII Corps. The Fifty-first (Highland) Division on the Left had no definite Objective. It was to push Outposts and Patrols along the N. Flank of the SCARPE, exploiting gains on the S. Bank, and endeavour to gain MOUNT PLEASANT.

Tasks of Divisions.

The Second Cdn. Division had two very definite Tasks to perform in the first Stage of the Battle. The Left or Northern Brigade (the 4th C.I.B.) was to capture CHAPEL HILL and consolidate the First Objective, i.e., the GREEN LINE. The Right or Southern Brigade (the 6th C.I.B.) was to advance along the inter-Brigade Boundary due E., following HUMBER TRENCH and EDINBURGH TRENCH to its junction on the GREEN LINE with HOSE TRENCH. This formed a defensive Flank and was the S. Boundary of the Corps Advance up to that time. This Flank was formed by 2 Battalions of the 6th(?) C.I.B. The moment that it was definitely established that the 4th C.I.B. had consolidated the GREEN LINE, these 2 Battalions turning to the Right, i.e. changing direction from N. to S., would advance and mop up enemy Defences down as far as the Southern Boundary. They would meet the Troops of the XVII Corps just N. of WANCOURT on the high ground commanding this Village.

After the First Objective was taken the 6th C.I.B. was to push forward and take VANCOURT and MARLIERE. The 4th C.I.B. would advance and make good the Second Objective N. of the COJEUL RIVER, keeping in close touch with the Third Division. If the latter were successful in their Attack on MONCHY, the 4th C.I.B. would then push on to GUEMAPPE and capture that Village if the number of Troops available were sufficient for this Task. The 6th C.I.B. was not to attempt to deal with enemy S. of the Defensive Flank until the 4th C.I.B. were established on the Second Objective.

The Second Objective taken, the attacking Divisions would exploit as far E. as possible. The Second Division was to maintain touch on the Right with the Flanking Division of the XVII Corps. The Third Division was to advance, refusing the Left Flank along the Crest of the Ridge running E. from MONCHY for the reason already stated.

The 5th C.I.B. was to be prepared either to pass through the 4th C.I.B. and exploit their success or to advance on the S. side of the COJEUL RIVER. To be in readiness for either of these Tasks the Units of this Brigade were to take up Positions of Deployment on the Western slopes of CHAPEL HILL with Left Flank on the CAMBRAI Road, when the first Objective had been gained.

On the Third Division Front the 8th C.I.B. was to attack the enemy Positions from the ARRAS-AMBRAI Road N. to the SCARPE RIVER. The dominating feature was MONCHY-le-PREUX, just W. of which was the formidable ORANGE HILL RIDGE, running N. and S. from the SCARPE to the COJEUL RIVER. The ground to the W. consisted of glaciais Slopes and provided an ideal Field of Fire, for enemy Machine Guns. Hence a Frontal Attack was out of the question. To avoid this the 8th C.I.B. would direct its main Attack along the S. Bank of the SCARPE RIVER. A subsidiary Attack would be made along the N. side of the CAMBRAI Road. The enemy's Defences were then to be rolled up from the N. The Task of the 8th C.I.B. was to gain the First and Second Objectives and to exploit Eastwards and capture MONCHY-le-PREUX. The 7th C.I.B. was then to leap-frog the 8th and exploit Eastwards to BOIRY-notre-DAME refusing its Left Flank whilst so doing for reasons already explained. The 9th C.I.B., in Divisional Reserve, was to be ready to push through in Support of the 7th C.I.B. or to exploit its success.

Machine Gun Battalions Move to the Line.

The Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., had arrived in the MONCHEAUX-HOUVIN-HOUVIGNEUL Area from the AMIENS Front on August 21st.¹²¹ The following day, August 22nd, No. 2 Company embussed at MONTS-en-TERNOIS, debussing as DAINVILLE and le BAC du NORD. The night of August 23rd this Company relieved the Fifteenth Battalion, M.G.C., in the Line on the ARRAS Front, with Horse Lines and Rear Details in WAILLY. The rest of the Battalion moved by train on August 23rd to MAROEUIL. No. 1 Company proceeded to WANQUENTIN and No. 3 Company, to DAINVILLE. On August 24th and 25th, No. 3 Company relieved the Third Battalion, C.M.G.C. in the Line. No. 1 Company remained in Billets until the 25th when it took up its Position for firing the Barrage which preceded the Attack on the 26th.

On August 21st, the Companies of the Third Battalion, C.M.G.C., were assembled at SUS-ST. LEGER having arrived from the AMIENS FRONT on the previous day, and on the following day moved to LIENCOURT. No. 3 Company relieved a Company of the Fifteenth Battalion, M.G.C., and 16 guns of the 1st Life Guards M.G. Battalion on the night August 23rd/24th. The same night, Nos. 1 and 2 Companies moved to Billets S.-E. of AGNY. These 2 Companies carried out a Reconnaissance of the Sector S. of the RIVER SCARPE on the 24th. Sir DOUGLAS HAIG paid an informal visit to the Transport Lines on the evening of the 24th. During the night of August 24th/25th 150,000 rounds of S.A.A. were moved to forward Dumps in readiness for the coming Attack, on August 25th. Nos. 1 and 2 Companies took up their Positions in the Line.

Jumping-off Line secured.

The Fifty-second Division, on the Left of the THIRD ARMY, and on the immediate Right of the Second Cdn. Division had attacked on the morning of August 24th, with the NEUVILLE VITASSE-ST. MARTIN-sur-COJEUL Road as their First Objective, and the HINDENBURG LINE N. of ST. MARTIN-sur-COJEUL and S. of HENINEL as the Second Objective. The 6th C.I.B. kept in close touch with the enemy during these Operations by means of Scouts and Observers. As the enemy showed signs of weakening, strong Patrols were pushed forward in Support of the Scouts. One Section of No. 2 Company, Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., was moved forward under the orders of the 6th C.I.B. to engage enemy movement that might develop between NEUVILLE VITASSE and the WANCOURT SPUR. In the evening of the 24th, strong Patrols of the 29th and 31st C.I.Bns. reported that NEUVILLE VITASSE was almost entirely in our hands. They secured some prisoners in THE MAZE, just S. of the Village. On the night of the 25th, Outposts were in the Southern outskirts of the Village, the Sugar Refinery being captured. In this way, a favourable Jumping-off Line was obtained for the Attack on the 26th.

Artillery.

Ample Artillery was available for Barrage purposes - 17 Brigades of Field, 9(?) Brigades of Heavy Artillery and the Long Range Guns of the Heavies.

Machine Gun Barrage.

The Arrangements for the Machine Gun Barrage were as follows:-

One Machine Gun was allotted to every 35 yds. on the Front of the Initial Assault. The Initial Barrage was to be fired by 16 Batteries of 8 Guns each from selected Positions on a Line stretching in a North-Easterly direction. The extreme right Battery Position was on the S.-E. Slope of TELEGRAPH HILL and the Left Position in FRUCHY COPSE. The Front Line was at an angle to the main direction of the Advance. Our Troops on the Right would therefore have to advance to a greater depth than those on the Left. This necessitated a deeper Machine Gun Barrage on the Right of the Line. Consequently secondary forward Positions had to be occupied after Zero by 6 Barrage Batteries on this Flank. The Crews to fire from the second Positions did not participate in the early stage of the Barrage, but followed the attacking Infantry to these Positions and by settled Programme carried on the Barrage. At the same time, the Batteries on the six original right Positions ceased to fire and the Guns withdrew to Reserve to await further Orders. The rate of Fire for all Guns of these Batteries was 5000 Rounds per hour, the Barrage lifting 100 yds. every 4 minutes.

In addition to these Guns, 32 Machine Guns of the 1st Life Guards M.G. Battalion were placed in Positions N. of the SCARPE and N.-W. of FAMPOUX in the Area occupied by the Fifty-first (Highland)

¹²¹ See Page ***

Division to support the Left Flank of the Canadian Corps (Third Division) by directing Fire on the Northern Slopes of ORANGE HILL and by supplying Neutralizing Fire on MOUNT PLEASANT.

After firing their Barrage Programmes the Guns of the Second and Third Battalions, C.M.G.C. were to report to the Brigade to which their Company was allotted; the Guns of the 1st C.M.M.G. Bde. and the 4 Batteries of the 1st Life Guards M.G. Battalion were to withdraw to Corps Reserve.

Allotment of Tasks, Second Bn., C.M.G.C.

On August 25th, Lieut.-Col. J.G. WEIR, M.C., in command of the Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., established his Headquarters at WARLUS. The Companies of his Battalion were allotted to Brigades as follows:- No. 2 Company to the 6th C.I.B. attacking on the Right, No. 3 Company to the 4th C.I.B., attacking on the Left and No. 1 Company to the 5th C.I.B. in Reserve.

Capt. RAMSAY, acting Officer Commanding, No. 2 Company, Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., moved "E" and "F" Batteries up to Positions on TELEGRAPH HILL on night August 25th/26th. "G" and "H" Batteries, after firing their program in the Initial Barrage, would come under his command. All 4 Batteries were to assist the 6th C.I.B. in their Attack and exploit the successes of the 4th C.I.B. on the Left.

Two Batteries of No. 3 Company (Major McCAMUS, M.C.), Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., were to take up Positions on the high ground just S. of the CAMBRAI Road, to take on opportunity Targets and, with Direct Overhead Fire, to assist the progress of the 4th C.I.B. The other two Batteries were, if possible, to move forward to Positions N. of WANCOURT, covering the ground to the S., S.-E. and N. of GUEMAPPE firing from E. to S.-W.

Until the Capture of the Second Objective the Batteries of No. 1 Company, Second Battalion, C.M.G.C., were engaged on Barrage work under Major BASEVI, Officer Commanding, No. 1 Company. After this, they were to report to Capt. HOBSON, M.C., M.M., with "A" Echelon Limbers packed and ready to move forward with the 5th C.I.B.

Allotment of Tasks, Third Bn., C.M.G.C.

Lieut.-Col. MOORHOUSE, Officer Commanding, Third Battalion, C.M.G.C., established his Headquarters with Advanced Third Division at LONDON CAVE on August 25th. The Companies of his Battalion were allotted to Brigades as follows:- No. 1 Company to the 8th C.I.B., attacking, No. 2 Company to the 7th C.I.B., in close Support and No. 3 Company to the 9th C.I.B., in Reserve.

No. 1 Company (Major HARTLEY, M.C., M.M.), Third Battalion, C.M.G.C., was given the Task of assisting the Infantry to consolidate both Flanks on GRANGE HILL; 2 Batteries to take up Positions commanding the Right and 2 on the Left Flank – subsequently two of these Batteries were to advance Right and Left, respectively, of MONCHY-le-PREUX to assist the Infantry in consolidating Positions won there.

As the 7th C.I.B.s Task was to support or exploit the success of the 8th C.I.B.s attack, the exact Positions to be occupied by No. 2 Company (Capt. DRINKWATER), Third Battalion, C.M.G.C., could not be definitely arranged until the result of the initial Attack was known. The general plan was that 2 Batteries would be held in Reserve in Rear of ORANGE HILL. A third Battery was to advance in Support of the Attack from the Right of MONCHY and the fourth, with 2 Companies of Infantry, was to form a Left Defensive Flank to the 7th C.I.B.

The 9th C.I.B. was in Support, ready to pass through the other 2 Brigades when all Objectives had been captured. One Battery of No. 3 Company (Capt. J.R. McLEAN), Third Battalion, C.M.G.C., operating with this Brigade was to advance to a Position due N. of BOIS-du-SART, one Battery to a point N.-W. of BOIS-du-VERT, supporting the Advance of the Infantry in the latter stages of the Attack. The remaining 2 Batteries were to endeavour to secure advantageous Positions E. of BOIS-du-SART and E. of BOIS-du-VERT.

Care was taken in choosing Machine Gun Positions so that the Guns were placed most advantageously to support the various Attacks and at the same time a formidable Machine Gun Defence in Dept was automatically formed.

OPERATIONS. AUGUST 26th, 1918.

6th C.I.B.

At Zero Hour August 26th, the 6th C.I.B. had 2 Battalions in the Front Line, the 31st on the Right and the 29th on the Left. The 27th and 28th C.I.Bns. assembled in Rear of the 29th C.I.Bn. The 27th C.I.Bn. attacked at Zero with 2 Companies in Front and 2 in close Support, under a Creeping Barrage, on the Left Flank of the 5th C.I.B, and in touch with the 4th C.I.B. in their Left. The whole of the 27th C.I.Bn., as it moved forward, formed a Defensive Flank, facing Southwards, along HUMBER and EDINBURGH TRENCHES and GORDON AVENUE. The Reserve Company of the 29th C.I.Bn. moved in Rear of the 27th C.I.Bn., joining up with the latter Battalion in HUMBER TRENCH, and continuing the Defensive Flank Westwards to the old Front Line. The Defensive Flank had a total length of 5000 yds., 3500 yds. of which was occupied by the 27th C.I.Bn. and 1500 yds. by the 29th C.I.Bn.

The 28th C.I.Bn., moving at Zero, followed the 27th C.I.Bn. and at Zero plus 3 hours formed up facing S. in Rear of one Company of the 27th C.I.Bn. and one Company of the 29th C.I.Bn. The Brigade was then disposed with the 31st C.I.Bn. holding original Right Flank Position, the 29th holding original Left and one Reserve Company of the 29th facing at right angles due S. in prolongation of the Defensive Flank formed by the 27th Battalion. The 27th C.I.Bn. was along EDINBURGH TRENCH-GORDON AVENUE, facing S. and the 28th C.I.Bn. in Rear of the 29th C.I.Bn. At Zero plus 2 hours approximately, after the Capture of the RED LINE (Second Objective) the 29th and 28th Battalions advanced due S. to mop up the Area. This was successfully done and all Objectives were gained.

In the afternoon Orders were received for the 6th C.I.B. to attack S.-E. and capture the WANCOURT RIDGE. This necessitated a complete change of direction and reorganization of the 27th and 28th C.I.Bns. This Attack took place at 4.30 P.M. and the Ridge was successfully captured.